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THE PRIEST AND HIS DISCIPLES

THE
PRIEST AND HIS DISCIPLES

A PLAY
BY
KURATA HYAKUZO

TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE

BY
GLENN W. SHAW

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AUTHOR'S DEDICATION

**THIS DRAMA I DEDICATE TO MY DEEPLY
PIOUS AUNT**

E'en the worst of sinners, I,
Simply on the Buddha cry
And, safe folded in his breast,
In salvation's self find rest :
Though eyes have I, I cannot see,
For lust of things preventeth me ;
But his great mercy never-ending
Ever lighteth all my wending.

(The Right-Belief Song of Invocation.)

INTRODUCTION

KURATA HYAKUZŌ, the author of the reading drama *Shukke to Sono Deshi*, of which this book is a sentence-for-sentence translation, was born in 1891 in Shōbara, a secluded little village some fifty miles north of Onomichi in Hiroshima Ken. He comes of an old family which has for generations conducted a substantial country dry-goods store there and owns a considerable acreage in neighboring rice-fields. After graduating with a good record from his provincial middle school, he was sent by his father to pursue his studies at the First High School in Tōkyō. But he read what appealed to him rather than what he was told to read and left school without completing the course. He had just lost his two elder sisters, given up his studies, been disappointed in love and fallen victim to an incurable tubercular affliction when, at the age of twenty-six, after having contemplated committing suicide and determined rather to fight out his life to its natural end, he wrote this, the first and still the greatest of the many successes which have now made him the idol of a growing group of young Japanese who find in his writings the encouragement and stimulus to help them brave out their own difficulties.

Shukke to Sono Deshi is a story of religion and

love woven about the lives of Shinran Shōnin and his disciples. Shinran (1173 to 1262) was the founder of the Shin sect of Buddhism, the outstanding features of which are its doctrine of salvation through faith in the Buddha Amida and its recognition of a normal married life for priests and laymen. It is to-day the largest and most influential of the Buddhist sects, having over 19,000 temples, nearly 15,000 priests, and adherents running up into the millions. Worship for them consists of the sincere recitation of the invocation *Namu Amida Butsu*, "Save us, oh Amida Buddha!"

Since its publication in 1918, *Shukke to Sono Deshi* has gone through well over a hundred editions. It has been rearranged for stage production and, after successful presentation before crowded and almost worshipfully attentive houses at the Imperial Theatre and the Yūrakuza in Tōkyō, and later at the Naniwaza in Ōsaka, is now on the road in the provinces. And it has been the immediate cause of a whole flood of books on the life of Shinran that still continue to come from the press in undiminished numbers.

Its great popularity seems to be due, not to its being good propaganda for the most popular of the Buddhist sects, which it undoubtedly is, nor to its being a historically accurate portrayal of the greatest revolutionizing figure in Japanese Buddhism, which it certainly is not, but rather to the sincere and

moving exposition it presents of the religious philosophy of a *thinking and struggling* contemporary in an unsettled land of change. In Japan to-day, as indeed in all lands, there are many people who cannot believe in anything, and Kurata offers them in story form what he believes to be the only reasonable attitude toward life. His story is packed with anachronisms and errors of fact. His Shinran is not the historical Shinran; some of the words he puts into Shinran's mouth were surely never spoken by anybody in Kyōto in the thirteenth century. He has simply taken a great and admired teacher whose heart looks to him like his own and, without violent wrenching, made him the vehicle for the expression of his own convictions.

And where did he get the terms with which to understand and in which to clothe those convictions? He got them everywhere, just as every modern Japanese writer does, out of his everyday life, out of his reading of Japanese, Chinese and western literature, out of Buddhism and out of Christianity. He makes no distinction between them, but having taken them all for his own, uses them as his own. His book may be called a twentieth century laboratory demonstration of that process of borrowing and adaptation that has through the ages altered all religions. Some Buddhist critics have avowed that Shinran must be weeping in his grave at the picture

Kurata has drawn of him. Some foreign Christians will surely call parts of the book deliberate steals. But other followers of Shinran have pointed out that if that generous reformer were living to-day, his teachings to the people of Japan would be less unlike those of Kurata than the illiberal critics suppose. And many liberal Christians, too, care more for the teaching than for its identification and will find this book a mixture in which their favorite beliefs are working as a leaven. Whatever others may think, Kurata Hyakuzō is evidently a serious man fighting death with his art and breathing into that art what he believes to be a vital message. Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper" and "Mona Lisa" hang together on the wall by his sickbed at Ōmori near Tōkyō and speak eloquently of two different loves he has added to his Japanese birthright, one the love of the man Jesus and the other the love of the feminine soul.

I have limited myself to the task of making a faithful translation of the words of the author. Where the text contains expressions employed in Christian phraseology, I have tried carefully not to read into them either more or less than their natural content. *Hitsuji* should certainly be rendered "sheep" despite its unnatural use as a Japanese religious metaphor, but whether *dōji no mure*, literally "a bevy of boys", the *dōji* of which is a word ordinarily used

to designate the youths who wait upon saintly persons in the East, should be turned into the Hebrew word "cherubim," is at least open to question. My only deliberate departure from the original, however, has been in the rearrangement, for the sake of uniformity, of some of the material at the heads of acts and scenes and, here and there, of the paragraphing of stage directions. The Japanese pronunciation of proper names has been used throughout, and all Japanese titles of courtesy have been retained.

I am indebted to the author for his kind permission to publish this translation and to my friend and neighbor, Mr. Nagura Jirō, for the invaluable assistance that makes me believe I have approached accuracy in my work.

GLENN W. SHAW.

Yamaguchi, June 3, 1922.

CONCERNING THE SIXTH EDITION

In this sixth edition of "The Priest and His Disciples," several typographical errors and imperfections have been corrected, three careless renderings have been altered, and two or three omitted words have been inserted. I have here to thank the many friends whose careful comparison of my translation with Kurata's original has brought to my attention the worst of the flaws in the first edition and made their removal easy.

G. W. S.

Yamaguchi, May 9, 1923.

PREFACE TO THE 1926 EDITION.

During the nearly three years that have elapsed since the stereotype plates of this book were destroyed along with the wealth of lives and property devoured by the earthquake-kindled flames that swept over Tōkyō during the first three days of September, 1923, several interesting things have happened to it.

Last year it was retranslated into Dutch and published in Holland, where it was received with interest.

The year before, in France, it fell into the hands of Romain Rolland, who at once wrote to Mr. Kurata, asking permission to publish it in French. Permission was given, but whether a French translation has yet appeared, I have never heard.

Meanwhile people in Japan have gone on comparing it sentence by sentence and word for word with the original, and two further inaccuracies in translation have kindly been brought to my notice. Availing myself of the opportunity offered by the present resetting of the type, these I have corrected. All other faults, I have left as they were.

That the book has justified its existence, I am glad. There seems to be something in it that appeals

to a good many people both in the East and in the West. I am also glad that its republication marks the successful resurrection from a heap of most discouraging ashes of the Hokuseidō press.

G. W. S.

OSAKA, JUNE 25, 1926.

THE PRIEST AND HIS DISCIPLES



INDUCTION

MORTALITY—A VISION THAT CAME TO ME ONCE ON A DAY

Man (walking on the face of the earth). I am born. And bathed in sunlight and breathing in the atmosphere, I live. Truly I live. See! That beautifully colored arch of a sky! And this black earth on which these naked feet of mine walk with firm step! Luxuriant trees and grasses, flying and frisking birds and beasts, and better still, the preciousness of woman, the love of children,—ah, I would live, I would live! (*Pauses.*) Up to this day, I have known all manner of grief. But the more I suffer, the more I like this world. Ah, strange world! I cling to thee. Lovable Shaba! I would play in the forests of worldly passions. I would live a thousand, nay, ten thousand years. Forever! Forever!

(*A Being with covered face appears.*)

Being. What are you?

Man. I'm a man.

Being. Then you're a thing that dies, aren't you?

Man. I'm alive. That's all I know.

Being. You evade again, I see.

Man. My father died. My father's father, too. Oh, many of my beloved neighbors also have died. But that I shall die, I cannot believe.

Being. You're spoilt, aren't you?

Man (after a moment's hesitation). In truth, I'm afraid. I fear I may die. Ah, you've looked through my heart. The truth is, I think I may die. For from the beginning, my ancestors, the wise patriarchs, have called themselves mortal.

Being. It's the truth. Like birds and beasts, grasses and trees, fishes and shells, you die.

Man. Who are you? You who speak with these words of authority?

Being. I'm the servant of that which never dies. Don't you know me?

Man. I seem to know you, but—no, I don't, after all.

Being. Often you seem to call my name. Especially of late, so often as to vex me.

Man. Then is it possible that you— Humbly I beg you to take off your veil and let me see your face but once.

Being. I don't show my face to mortals. To things that die.

Man. Why not?

Being. Because if seen of a mortal, I'd die of shame.

Man. In the words "thing that dies," I hear what seems to be a meaning of contempt.

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Being. That's because death comes of sin. The sinless live eternally. "Thing that dies" is identical with "sinner."

Man. Then do you say that all men are sinners?

Being. They're all bad. The price of sin is death.
(*Disappears.*)

Man. This was he. That's certain. What on earth is he, illusion or actuality? At first I was sure he was a phantom. But gradually I reached the point where I couldn't believe it, for his terrible power of destruction is too plain. If he's real, what on earth is he? I'd like to see what he really is. If I but knew that, I'd not fear him. Because, knowing the real nature of those fearful things, fire and water, I use them according to their own laws and make them turn the wheels of my mills and heat my furnaces. I'd like to know his laws. I'd like to get hold of his real being. Otherwise my life will always be threatened. It's my misfortune that I've made his acquaintance. But my wisdom also has grown. Ah, but he's fearful!

Being (reappearing). You called me again, didn't you?

Man. I want to see your face.

Being. It cannot be.

Man. Not possibly?

Being. That wish is beyond your station. So long as your eyes are impure.

Man. Not though I make you?

Being. You poor thing!

(Man extends his hand and tries to take off the veil.)

Being. Cursed be that hand! *(Distant thunder rolls. Man falls to his knees. A phantom procession appears.)*

Being. Behold!

Man. A line of birds, beasts and creeping things goes by. The eagle controls the dove, the wolf oppresses the sheep, and the snake lords it over the frog. But he who rides at the head of the procession on a horse, clad in mail and armed with bow and arrow, looks like a man.

Being. He leads the whole procession.

Man. He's their conqueror.

Being. And the most pitiful of all pitiful things.

Man. Ah, he's clapped spur to his horse, and all have broken into a charge. *(Boisterous music is heard.)* Just like a tempest. Where can they be going so rapidly?

Being. To destruction. To that place where go all who know me not.

Man. Oh!

(The procession passes on. The stormy music gradually calms down and changes into a quiet dream tune. A new vision appears.)

Being. Behold!

Man. It's a young man and woman, isn't it? He embraces her with his strong arms. And she buries her face on his breast. Her black hair quivers on her pearly shoulders. She must be intoxicated with sweet delight.

Being. Look well.

Man (looking intently). Ah, she's crying. He releases her and sighs. He looks lonely.

Being. They're beginning to know that happiness breaks.

Man. Aren't they calling you?

Being. They've begun to think of me. But they naturally shrink from calling me. They're deceiving themselves.

Man. The man tries to take her in his arms again. But this time she resists and gets away. And she's cursing him. He seizes her. He pulls her by main force to the edge of the cliff. . . . Ah, look out! (*He cries.*) Ah!

Being. It's the mistaken fall of those who see me not directly.

(*The music stops and the vision vanishes.*)

Man. I acknowledge you. I look straight at you. I'm importunate to see your real nature.

Being. With the intelligence of a little monkey, eh? With an intelligence that goes round surfaces, but can't possibly go to the heart of things.

Man. I acknowledge your power. Your power of destruction. Why do you destroy things?

Being. To temper the unbreakable and imperishable.

Man. I seek such imperishable things. Ever since meeting you, I've been looking for something you can't break.

Being. Have you found it?

Man. Not yet. You've broken everything I thought permanent. Desire of conquest, friendship, love, learning.

Being. It's my work to destroy all things that deserve destruction. (*A pause.*)

Man. I've found what looks to be permanent. This time there's no mistake.

Being. What?

Man. My child. Though I grow weak and die, my child lives on with new strength. I breathe my desires into his soul.

Being. You don't know yet, I see.

Man. What?

Being. Your son is dead.

Man. What! (*Grows sickly pale.*) Is such a thing possible?

Being. The bad news will be here shortly.

Man. It was only this morning a letter came saying he was studying in good health.

Being. He died just after noon.

Man. It's a lie.

(The Being preserves silence.)

Man (staring). Ah, there's truth in your attitude.
(Hopelessly.) It's all over!

Being. Good-bye.

Man (excited). Wait. My son was concealing some illness, wasn't he? Thinking not to worry his poor father.

Being. He was the liveliest of all his class.

Man. Did he fight a duel? To strike down some discourteous insulter? For he prized his good name.

Being. No.

Man. Then how did he die?

Being. He fell from a chimney.

(Man becomes like one struck dumb.)

Being. Up to within two minutes before, he was talking merrily with his friends on a sunlit lawn. Then one of them, upon a sudden impulse, said, "Won't somebody show us how to climb that chimney?" Your son, also in caprice and thinking in his lovable and humorous heart to give his friends a laugh, said gayly, "I'll give her a try," and began to climb. The rest praised his nimbleness. But the spike step at the very top was rotten.

Man. Oh!

Being. Men said the degenerate chimney-sweep who came later in the afternoon was a lucky man.

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Man (groaning). It's art. The permanent thing is art. I'll mix my colors with my tears. I'll paint into my canvas that which can't be broken.

Being. When it comes to that, I say not whether it be permanent or not. But you don't forget your illness, do you?

Man. Not for a moment. When you took my health from me, my misfortunes began. And I first knew you then. Since that time, how I've suffered!

Being. If your temperature goes up two degrees, you'll have to throw away your brush.

Man. Oh!

Being. Do you think that impossible? Even now don't you have fever every day?

Man. It's prayer. The permanent thing is prayer. Though I can't move in my bed, I can close my eyes and pray.

Being. If a single blow disturbs the balance of your head, you'll talk silly nonsense with the mouth that has prayed till now, and with the hands so admirably folded till now, you'll do filthy things before the eyes of the world. Like a monkey in a zoo.

Man (staggering). Such things are impossible.

Being. They're possible. For example, recently your fellows have been killing each other by the millions, and there's no telling how many such idiots have come of it.

Man. You're too cruel.

Being. Simply according to your deserts.

(The cry of living things, birds and beasts without number, arises.)

Man (afraid). That cry?

Being. It's the curse of the creatures you've killed.

Man. Ah. *(He presses his head in his hands.)*

Being. You're a thing born of adultery. Though you hide it under the name of love.

Man. Leave off the numbering of my sins.

Being. For they're numberless.

Man. I couldn't live without eating these, and I'm so made that I can't reproduce without adultery.

Being. That's the lot of mortals.

Man (pleadingly). Pity the sufferings of man.

Being. Compassion's not my business.

Man. Why not? Ah, why not?

Being. It's to punish! *(The earth trembles furiously. Man falls to the ground. The Being vanishes. The stage is pitch dark. The noise of a tempest arises. Then the tumult gradually dies down, the stage becomes dimly lighted, a pale blue sky is seen in the distance, and Man's body is visible stretched out like a corpse. Soft music plays. Cherubim appear above and sing.)*

Cherubim. Blessed be all creatures on earth,

Joy be to the Immortal's dear children.

(The Cherubim vanish.)

Man (standing up and raising his face to heaven).
Far, far away is the blue of the sky. A vague longing pulls me thither. I have the sweet feeling of being drawn in. I begin to be sure that this world must be good. I can no longer doubt the existence of permanent things. I'm surely controlled by some power. But I'm satisfied that I'm controlled with kindness. As if the acceptance of it is happiness itself. I go. *(Takes two or three steps forward.)* To yonder sky. Till my soul be lifted up.

(Curtain.)

THE PRIEST AND HIS DISCIPLES

ACT I

PERSONS IN THE ACT

HINO SAEMON, aged 40.

OKANE, his wife, aged 36.

MATSUWAKA, his son (after taking the tonsure called Yuien), aged 11.

SHINRAN, aged 61.

JIEN, Shinran's disciple, aged 60.

RYŌKAN, Shinran's disciple, aged 27.

SCENE I

(The house of HINO SAEMON. A hearth is cut into the middle of the floor of the room. A spear hangs on the moulding and on the wall a gun, a rush hat, a straw raincoat, and such things. Toward the right of the stage stands a gate. Outside, a small open space connects with a path. Snow is piled deep, showing a depression only where the path runs.)

Okane (sewing on a garment beside the hearth).
At last I've got this much done. I ought to finish in four or five days. Anyway if I don't get it done in a hurry, New Year's will be here. Matsuwaka will be twelve next year. I wish he'd grow up quickly. I really feel that I'd like to stretch him out. *(Pauses.)*

Which reminds me, I wonder why Saemon Dono has become so violent of late. He seems to be getting worse and worse. Though he was no such man back in our native place. Really I'm anxious about the future. (*From outside comes the noise of the storm blowing by.*) To-day he went to Kichisuke Dono's in a fit of anger, but I hope no trouble comes of it. (*Stands up, opens the door, and looks out at the sky.*) Oh, it's cold. (*Shivers.*) It's snowing again. (*Closes the door and comes to the hearth, stirs the fire with the poker and holds out her hands to the heat.*) How late Matsuwaka is to-day, when in this cold he ought to come back quickly. (*Looks about her.*) It's dark already. (*Stands up, takes a paper lamp out of a closet, and lights it. Offers a taper at the family shrine and prays with folded hands. Enter MATSUWAKA. His color is bad. He is dressed in clothes that make him look puffy. He opens the house door.*)

Matsuwaka. Mother, I'm back. (*Throws down a bundle in a cloth wrapper and his copy-book.*) Oh, it's cold, it's cold. (*Blows his breath on his fingers.*)

Okane. Oh, you're back. You must be cold. Come, warm yourself. To-day you're very late, aren't you?

Matsuwaka (*going up to the hearth*). There was a party at the teacher's. All of us were invited. That's why I'm late.

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Okane. Was there? That's fine. Did you eat nicely?

Matsuwaka. Yes. I got the mark of the pine on my clean copy.

Okane. Did you? That's fine. Let's see your copy-book; the time before, you got the bamboo mark, didn't you? (*Takes the copy-book from MATSUWAKA and opens it.*) I see, it's "He who touches cinnabar, gets red," isn't it? You've become much surer, haven't you? It would be still better if you arranged your characters a little more carefully. This is the result of studying hard. (*Pats MATSUWAKA's head.*)

Matsuwaka. Kichisuke San's boy Kichiya got the plum mark.

Okane. Because he's mischievous and idle. (*Pauses.*) Here, just stand up a minute. (*MATSUWAKA stands up. She takes the length of his kimono with a stick.*) Three and a half inches. Then I must make the tuck narrow. Your kimono, you see. It'll look fine on you. On New Year's day you'll put it on and go call on the teacher.

Matsuwaka. When's New Year's?

Okane. Sleep ten more nights and it'll be here.

Matsuwaka. Where's father?

Okane. Father's gone to Kichisuke's. He'll be back any minute now.

Matsuwaka. Kichisuke's Kichiya teases me. To-

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day again, as we were coming back from our lessons, they all said bad things about me.

Okane. What? Said bad things and teased you? Really?

Matsuwaka. He called father a bad man because, although he's an outsider, he abuses the peasants, and he kills living things.

Okane. Good gracious! (*Looks sad.*) Did he say that?

Matsuwaka. Yes. Kichiya said since my father abused his father, he'd abuse me, and he threw snow at me.

Okane. He's a bad boy. It's all right. I'll tell the teacher.

Matsuwaka. No. Once when I told, he abused me worse than before on the way home. (*Regretfully.*) He pushed me off the roadside into a wet rice-field.

Okane. Gracious! Does he do such terrible things? Don't worry. I'll soon fix things right for you.

Matsuwaka. All right. (*Nods his head.*)

Okane (*getting a plate of dried persimmons from a closet*). Come, help yourself to these. They're some I dried in the autumn. I'm going to the kitchen for a moment. (*Goes out the back door.*)

(*MATSUWAKA eats the persimmons. Then he looks around him, goes up in front of the household shrine,*

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and stands gazing wonderingly at the image of Buddha. Then he sits down and touches his hands together in momentary worship. Then searching for a book on the table, he comes to the fireside with a volume of pictures and looks at it, turning the pages curiously. Enter OKANE, wiping her hands on her apron.)

Okane. They're good, aren't they? *(Pauses.)*
What are you looking at?

Matsuwaka. Yes, they're good. *(Gazes intently at the picture-book.)*

Okane. I'll sew a little while we wait. *(Brings the unfinished garment to the hearth and plies her needle. Both are silent for a moment.)*

Matsuwaka. Mother. What's this picture?

Okane (stopping her needle). Let me see. *(Looks closely at the picture.)* It's a picture of the death of the Buddha called Oshaka Sama. *(Goes on sewing.)*

Matsuwaka. Is it? Many priests in robes are weeping beside him, aren't they?

Okane. They're all his disciples. They cry because their great teacher is dead.

Matsuwaka. H'm. There are monkeys and snakes, aren't there? And doves, too. They're all weeping, aren't they? Why's that?

Okane. Oshaka Sama was a very merciful man and loved even the beasts. So they're weeping because he who loved them is dead.

Matsuwaka. H'm. (*Thinks.*)

(*Enter SAEMON, wearing a hunting suit. He carries a gun on his shoulder and two or three birds at his belt.*)

Saemon. I'm back. It's frightfully cold.

Okane. Welcome home. We've been waiting for you. You must be cold. Is it snowing? (*Goes to the door to meet him.*)

Saemon. It's a big snow. At this rate, the roads'll be blocked up. (*Brushes off the snow.*)

Matsuwaka. Father. Welcome. (*Puts his hands down on the mats and bows his head.*)

Saemon. H'm. (*Pats his head.*) To-day there was a feast at the teacher's, wasn't there?

Matsuwaka. Yes. You know well, don't you?

Saemon. I heard about it from the boy Kichiya at Kichisuke's house.

Okane. How did your talk come out? (*Hangs the gun on the wall and puts away the game.*)

Saemon. Not well at all. To-day I've had a hard time of it. Wandering hither and thither in the hills from early morning, I finally bagged three non-descript birds. Then I called at Kichisuke's, but that rascal's a sly fellow. When I talked strong, he sobbed and wept tears and tried to beg me off. Yet if I should be tender, he would treat me harshly. It's absolutely impossible to manage the farmers in this

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neighborhood. (*Changes his clothes and comes to the fire.*)

Okane. Then how did it come out?

Saemon. I scolded him and assured him that if he didn't pay by New Year's, he might be sure I'd take whatever measures I thought best. Then he turned deadly pale. His wife clung to me making excuses. And even Kichiya burst into tears along side.

Okane. Gracious, isn't it pitiful? Please wait a little before you do anything. For they must surely be in trouble, too.

Saemon. There's no telling. I hate that Kichisuke cordially. Though he has some scheme up his sleeve, he flatters. This very spring he encroached upon our rice-fields as if by accident.

Okane. Of course Kichisuke is bad, but this, too, is because of his great troubles.

Saemon. When it comes to trouble, aren't we in trouble ourselves? Ever since we moved here, one piece of bad luck has followed another. The rice-fields we bought with our scant savings were flooded, Matsuwaka got sick, and it's been no easy life, I can tell you. If I'm kind, I get nothing settled. It's not only Kichisuke. The farmers about here are all the same. I sometimes feel desperate. I hate all the people in the world.

Okane. But please let them celebrate this New

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Year's safely anyway. If you treat him harshly and gain his enmity, you'll not be able to sleep for remorse. Don't they say that he who's beaten sleeps, but he who beats cannot? (*Pauses.*) Come, please eat your supper. (*Goes out at the back door.*)

Saemon. Matsuwaka, what have you been looking at all the time?

Matsuwaka. It's mother's picture-book. It was on the stand in the shrine. There are lots of pictures in it. There are pictures of palaces and temples and goblins pulling fire-cars and—

Saemon. Ah. It's that "Guide to Hell and Paradise."

Matsuwaka. I know about Hell and Paradise. Men who've done good go to Paradise when they die, and men who've done bad go to Hell. But is that true?

Saemon. It's all a lie. These things are said as a warning. (*Thinking.*) If it is true, there's probably nothing but Hell. (*Laughs.*)

Matsuwaka. Here's a picture in which children are piling up many stones by a river and goblins are knocking them down with iron clubs, but what is it?

Saemon (*looking gloomy*). It's the Sai-no-Kawara, where children go when they die.

Matsuwaka. When I die, shall I go to the Sai-no-Kawara?

Saemon. It's all a lie. It's a made-up story.

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(*Looks into MATSUWAKA's face.*) Stop looking at that book.

Matsuwaka. Somehow it interests me.

Saemon. No, that's no book for a child to be looking at. (*Takes the picture-book away from MATSUWAKA.*) You're cold, so go to bed now. You mustn't catch cold again.

Matsuwaka. I'm not sleepy yet.

(*Enter OKANE. She places a box tray with a saké bottle on it before SAEMON.*)

Okane. I'm sorry I've kept you waiting. You must be hungry. Now please eat. (*Takes up the bottle.*)

Saemon(*holding out a cup to have it filled and drinking*). *Okane.* It wasn't my original nature to be cruel. From childhood I've been so timid that my heart throbs when I see others quarrel. But after I was forsaken like that by my master and came to this place a roving samurai, I became sick and tired in the knowledge of the evil in men's hearts. Men are all bad. The trustful are betrayed. The good are made fools of and can't possibly get on. I feel like laughing scornfully. This is what I think. My weak nature makes me tender-hearted. I must overcome it. I must make my heart strong to bear cruel things. I'm trying to accustom myself to my own cruelty.

Okane. Gracious! Is it possible that any man

would do such a thing? Strive to make his heart bad instead of good?

Saemon (drinking and drinking and talking). I intend to become a bad man. I want to strip the hide off the faces of the rascals who go round looking innocent. They all do nothing but lie. I, even I, sometimes try to work it out. But I think there are only two things to do in this world, either to die or to turn thief. If I want to live, I must eat. If I want to eat without competing with men, there's no way but to turn beggar. If every one in the world was gifted with understanding, the beggar's way of living would be the most pleasant. But it's the hardest of things to live on scraps got from abominable men who throw them to you as if to a dog and look upon you with pitying eyes. And all the men in the world are that sort. If begging's impossible, how much better must it be to take what one wants by force. If I must fight anyhow, rather than look benevolent or believe myself benevolent or wear the mask of hypocrisy, I'd go forth proclaiming myself a bad man. Or else should I beg? Or if I be too proud, should I die? But I have no desire to die yet. Then I must be strong. But I'm weak-spirited. I must drill myself to be strong. To-day at Kichisuke's when his wife cried, I began to feel dizzy. Scolding myself and determined that I must be strong, I thundered at them. If it was a case of matching

badness, I felt that I could go to any degree. (*Drinks.*)

Okane. My, I'm surprised that you can lump everything in such a general way. Please stop talking like that before Matsuwaka. Isn't this the same thing as a father teaching his own son to be a thief? You're by no means the type of man to be a criminal. For you're gentle at heart. Isn't that a good nature?

Saemon. No, I don't want to think of myself as good natured. If I'm good, why don't I turn beggar? No, why don't I die? It's all a fake. Don't you understand what I say? (*Gradually grows violent.*)

Okane. I understand how you feel, but —

Saemon. I'm too weak. That's why we've got poor since coming here. I'm taken for the fizzle of a samurai who doesn't understand affairs, and I'm given business that's known to be worthless, and my fields are encroached upon, and money I've loaned isn't returned. Soon I'll have to beg in spite of myself. The three of us'll have to stand in front of detestable men's gates begging for pity. I love you and Matsuwaka. If we don't become strong before long, our end is sure. Anyway it's no good being weak. (*Gulps down saké.*)

Okane (in troubled tones). Please stop. The *saké*. You're gradually getting violent, you see. I'm really worried. And you're getting a bad name in the neighborhood. To-day again, listen. (*Lowering her*

voice.) Matsuwaka tells me that Kichiya urged on the other children and abused him. That, husband, is all the reward of your violence.

Saemon. Why do you blame it on me?

Okane. He said, "Your father's a taker of life and an abuser of peasants. Because he abuses my father, I'll abuse you," and he threw snow at him and pushed him down off the road.

Saemon. Did he do that? He's a scoundrel. Tell the teacher.

Okane. He says if I do, they'll treat him worse on the way home.

Saemon (angrily). That little devil, Kichiya! All right, if he's up to such tricks, I know what to do. To-morrow I'll go to Kichisuke's again and give it to him hot.

Okane. Such rough treatment on the contrary will not be for Matsuwaka's good. It would be better for you to turn gentle and be kind to the peasants. Wouldn't it be best for you to be reasonable and act according to your original nature.

Saemon. If I did, this house would go to ruin before our eyes. In this world men are not made so that they'll repay gentleness with honesty. If you mean to be gentle to the end, there's no way, as I've said, but to resign yourself to standing before detestable fellows' gates. Are you ready for that? I wasn't born with a nature skilful at getting along in the

world. Unless I harden it, I can't make a living. I can't keep my wife and child and ward off other shame. (*Gets excited.*) I must make myself stronger to bear evil. Thank heaven, I seem gradually to be getting worse. Long ago, if men spoke ill of me, it troubled me, and I couldn't sleep. Now, though they talk, I'm indifferent. No, it even makes me feel good. "I've grown strong," I tell myself. At first even when I shot a bird or a beast, or even when I killed a chicken, I hated it thoroughly, but now it's nothing. (*Drinks.*)

Okane. I've been wanting to talk to you. For heaven's sake, give up hunting. I hate killing from the bottom of my heart. We don't need to hunt to eat.

Saemon. At first I found it unpleasant, but now it's so much fun I can't give it up. There's a bird on the branch of yonder tree. "That's mine already," I think, and I feel a triumphant joy. It lives or dies as I wish, you see. When the thing comes fluttering down and I pick it up, the blood's on its feathers, and it's still warm. And sometimes when I hit one in the wing, it comes flapping down still alive. Then I don't let it suffer long, but twist its neck and put it out of its misery.

Okane. I've heard enough of such talk, so please stop. How my mother loathed the taking of life when she lived! She was so deeply pious, you

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know. Perhaps because of her teaching, I hate it with all my heart. There's nothing I dislike so much as the cry of the chickens when you kill them in the yard. And—(*glancing at MATSUWAKA*) and somehow I feel that Matsuwaka's grown weak like that since you began to kill.

Saemon. Is such tomfoolery possible? I'm tired of your superstition.

Okane. And you have no faith. Please just give thanks at least just in the morning and evening, won't you? If I neglect my prayers just once, I feel awfully bad. I really worry about my future. It's not unnatural, when you act so, that good fortune's kept from coming round.

Saemon. It's no use praying to Buddha. It bores me to sit looking at the face of his image. (*Pauses.*) To-night I feel queer and can't get drunk at all. It's because you talk nothing but gloom. I've got to get drunker. (*Drinks two or three cups one after another.*)

Okane. Please stop that reckless drinking. (*Looks with worried eyes at SAEMON and is quiet for a moment.*) I'm truly discouraged. (*The roar of the storm passes outside the door.*) It's a dreadful snow, isn't it?

(*SAEMON sits helping himself and tippling. OKANE is buried in thought. MATSUWAKA looks at his book. SHINRAN, JIEN and RYÖKAN enter right. They are*

dressed in black robes, carry boxes on their backs, wear straw sandals on their feet, and walk with staves. The snow is heaped up on their big rush hats.)

Jien. It's turned into a terrible snow, hasn't it?

Ryōkan. It seems to be getting fiercer and fiercer.

Jien. Master. You seem to be very tired.

Ryōkan. The sleeve of your robe's soaked and grown cold as ice.

Shinran. It's some time since the sun set, isn't it?

Jien. The road's all blocked with snow.

Ryōkan. I have no strength to walk farther.

Shinran. Then shan't we get somebody to keep us hereabouts?

Jien. Let's ask a night's lodging at this house.

Ryōkan. There's no other to be seen, is there?
(*Goes to the gate and knocks.*) Hello! Hello!

Matsuwaka(*listening*). Father. Some one's knocking at the gate.

Okane. It's the sound of the wind.

Saemon. For nobody would go out in this storm, you see.

Matsuwaka. No. Surely somebody's knocking at the gate.

Ryōkan(*knocking loud*). Hello! Hello! I beg of you. I beg of you.

Okane(*listening*). Sure enough, some one's knocking at the gate. It sounds like some man's voice.

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(*Goes down into the yard and opens the gate.*) Who is it? (*Sees the three priests.*) Is there something? (*MATSUWAKA stands gazing curiously from behind his mother.*)

Ryōkan. We're traveling priests and distressed in this snow-storm. I'm really very sorry to trouble you, but may we not beg a place to stay for the night?

Okane. You must be sorely troubled; if you'll go on some ten *cho* farther, there's an inn.

Jien. Er,—we're walking about as mendicants and have no money.

Ryōkan. Any place at all will do, just so we can sleep.

Okane. I see. (*Looks intently at the three priests.*) Then I'll just ask my husband. It's cold there. Please come in and warm yourselves.

Saemon. Okane. What is it?

Okane. It's some traveling priests. There are three. They're in trouble because of the snow and want to know if we won't keep them just one night. They have no money and can't stay at an inn.

(*The three priests come in and stand in the yard.*)

Saemon (*making an unpleasant face*). I'm sorry, but we won't, I guess.

Okane. But they're in trouble, so hadn't we better keep them?

Saemon. No, we can't.

Okane. Husband, isn't it all right? They'll be no trouble. And aren't they priests?

Saemon. That's enough. (*Speaks roughly.*) We can't keep them because they are priests. I abominate priests. I hate them more than anything in the world.

Okane. Don't say such impolite things. (*In an undertone to JIEN.*) He's drunk on *saké*. Please don't be offended.

Jien (*to SAEMON*). Anywhere will do. Can't you put us up just for to-night?

Saemon. I can't.

Ryōkan. The edge of the veranda will do.

Saemon. You're persistent knaves, aren't you?

Jien. Master, what shall we do?

Shinran. I'll try asking once more. (*To SAEMON.*) It's a nuisance, but since we're in distress, can't you take thought for your karma relations and take us in for just one night?

Saemon. You're the superior, aren't you? (*Sneering.*) Indeed you've put on a gracious face. But unfortunately I don't like priests. They don't appeal to me.

Shinran. I see that you don't like us. But please take us in out of pity.

Saemon. Pity you? No, thank you. You're the most enviable men in the world. In this life, you're respected by everybody, and when you die, you'll go

to Paradise, won't you? They say you do nothing but good, don't they? I do nothing but evil, do I? We're simply not of the same stripe at all.

Shinran. Nay. It's I that do nothing but evil.

Saemon (*not listening to SHINRAN*). The sermons you preach are precious things, aren't they? Thanks to you, bad men'll disappear from the world. You teach that men can dispel their sins by alms and masses, and they all rejoice and come to you bringing rice, and coin. Your temples flourish. You can sit down and live at ease. It's a gracious doctrine that if a man does good he can go to Paradise. But unfortunately this world's so contrived that you can't do good in it. Everybody'll go to Paradise, I tell you. (*Laughs.*)

Shinran. What you say is true.

Saemon. You're a wonderful bunch. You can read a lot of difficult sutras. And you do what's written in those sutras. You don't kill anything, you don't eat meat, and you don't have wives. You're just like living Buddhas. You don't curse men in your hearts, and you don't feel carnal passion at the sight of a woman. No, you don't even dream foul dreams. That's splendid, isn't it? To have such remarkable men stay in the house of a vile one like me would be overwhelming.

Shinran. Extraordinary! I'm positively no such pure man as you say.

Saemon. I took life once more this morning. And after that I had a quarrel. And then I drank *saké*. Now, I've just called you—

Okane. Saemon Dono! Have you no self-restraint? Isn't this painful to the ears of those who stand by and hear? (*Blushes. To SHINRAN.*) Good priest. Bear with him, please. (*To SAEMON.*) Husband, if you must refuse, wouldn't it be better not to be foul-mouthed and sarcastic like that, but to simply say so and refuse quietly?

Saemon. For which reason, didn't I refuse from the first? Since I hate priests, I can't keep them.

Jien. Then, it doesn't matter if you don't keep us two. Please keep just the superior. For he's very tired.

Ryōkan. As you see, he's shivering with the cold.

Jien. If the storm but lets up, we'll start on early to-morrow morning.

Ryōkan. Think of this request for a night's lodging as some fate.

Saemon. If I say I can't, I can't.

(*The tempest is noisy outside.*)

Jien. I don't care about myself. Only the superior— (*His eyes fill with tears.*)

Saemon. Unfortunately I hate him worst of all. He who teaches men lies is supremely detestable. Tell you about me, I'm a bad man, but I know it.

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Shinran. You've hit on a good idea. You feel much as I do.

Saemon (laughing). There's a nice chance that we're alike.

Ryōkan. Then can't we stay ?

Saemon. You can't.

Jien. Then we'll swallow our lot. Please just let us dry our robes at the hearth. They're soaked and cold as ice.

Okane. Yes, yes, please come and dry them. I'll put on charcoal at once and make up a good fire for you. (*Starts toward the hearth.*)

Saemon (stopping her). None of your meddling. (*His voice becomes gruff.*) What persistent rascals you are! Don't you understand after all I've been saying to you? Get a little huffy. You hypocrites! You brazen-faced—

Okane. Saemon Dono! Saemon Dono!

Saemon (to SHINRAN). Hurry up and get out. You begging shaveling! (*Pushes him.*)

Jien. This is too much, the ill-mannered—

Ryōkan. You put your hand on the superior, didn't you?

Saemon. Hurry and get out! (*Shows RYŌKAN.*)

Ryōkan. What—(*Grasps his staff.*)

Saemon. Do you mean to strike? (*Takes SHINRAN'S staff and brandishes it.*)

Shinran. Ryōkan! Violence won't do! (*Steps*

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between the two. SAEMON strikes him. The staff falls on his box.)

Jien. Master, please come out quickly. (*Obstructs SAEMON.*)

Matsuwaka. Father! Father! (*Bewildered.*)

Okane (turning pale). Saemon Dono! Saemon Dono! (*Grabs SAEMON in her arms from behind and holds him.*)

Saemon. Let go. I'll beat them.

(SHINRAN, JIEN and RYŌKAN go outside the gate. SAEMON throws the staff after them. It falls on the snow.)

Matsuwaka. Father! Father! (*Clings to SAEMON crying.*)

Okane (running out and stroking SHINRAN nervously). It must have hurt. Forgive him. What shall I do? Aren't you bruised?

Shinran. It's nothing. When one goes about as a mendicant, this sort of thing happens to one now and then.

Okane. Please don't curse my husband. (*Weeps.*) Though he's an evil man, please forgive him.

Shinran. Don't be troubled. Rather, I think him a sincere man.

Jien. He's too cruel, I think.

Ryōkan (tearfully). Master. I'm utterly discouraged.

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE II

(The stage is the same as in Scene I. Night. In the house, SAEMON, OKANE and MATSUWAKA lie asleep in a row. Outside, SHINRAN is sleeping with his head on a rock for a pillow. RYŌKAN and JIEN sit on the snow talking.)

Jien. It's grown late, hasn't it?

Ryōkan. The wind's gone down, but it's turned colder.

Jien. I feel as if my toes have fallen off my feet. *(A pause.)* Is the superior asleep?

Ryōkan. Till a moment ago he was repeating the prayer to Amida, but he seems to have dropped off with fatigue.

Jien. He's sleeping calmly, isn't he?

Ryōkan. Look at the nobleness of his sleeping face.

Jien. A living Buddha must be like the superior, I think.

Ryōkan. My love for him hurts. *(Shields SHINRAN'S face with his robe against the falling snow.)*

Jien. This is no simple hardship, is it?

Ryōkan. I'm young, so it's all right for me, but it must be hard on you and the superior. I only hope it won't injure you. *(Touches SHINRAN'S body.)* He's just as cold as ice.

Jien. The people in the house are probably sleeping warm beside the hearth, aren't they?

Ryōkan. The man's too cruel, isn't he? Though he's drunk.

Jien. It seems he might have loaned us the edge of his veranda.

Ryōkan. Though I've been on pilgrimages, I've never met with such treatment as this before.

Jien. That he should strike the superior!

Ryōkan. Only then did I get angry and find it hard to bear. If the superior hadn't stopped me, I meant to beat him to a pulp.

Jien. That hand will surely wither. (*Pauses.*) I admire his powers of endurance. For a long time I went on pilgrimage with him through the deep snows of the mountain roads of the Echigo country, and there we underwent all sorts of hardships. At times we were all but starving and at times we were attacked by robbers in the mountains. And when we crossed the dangerous cliffs of Oyashirazu and Koshirazu, he cut his feet on the sharp corners of the rocks and his toed-socks were soaked red with blood.

Ryōkan. For he probably never used straw sandals when he was in Kyōto, did he?

Jien. He always rode in a palanquin. A big retinue of disciples accompanied him. Since the day he incurred the displeasure of the government and was

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exiled, his sufferings have been beyond the power of words to express.

Ryōkan. You've been with him constantly since that time, haven't you?

Jien. I shall follow him till I die. When I consider the love I've received from him since then, I can't think of leaving him, no matter what pain I suffer.

Ryōkan. You're right. (*Pauses.*) The priests of Mt. Hiei and Nara are detestable to me. Why did they bring false charges evilly against such a noble saint? I can imagine the disorders of Kyōto in those days.

Jien. The thought of those times is unbearable. His greatest disciples were either beheaded or sent into exile. How many who loved each other dearly must have been separated! Even yet I can't forget the leave-taking of the superior and Hōnen Sama.

Ryōkan. How they must have lamented!

Jien. For they loved each other so dearly. When the superior went to Hōnen Sama's retreat at Komatsudani to bid him farewell, he found him sitting before a writing desk repeating the invocation to Amida. He lifted up his voice and wept. For he knew that in any case, far from each other in Tosa and Echigo, they would never meet again. And besides, Hōnen Shōnin was an old man, nearly eighty.

Ryōkan. What did Hōnen Sama say? (*His eyes fill with tears.*)

Jien. He said, "Shinran. Don't cry. Let's part repeating Amida's prayer. We're sure to meet in the Pure Land. We'll both be beautiful Buddhas then. Namu Amida Butsu."

Ryōkan. Was that the last they ever saw of each other?

Jien. It was the unforgettable sixteenth day of the third month of the first year of Shōgen [1207], when Kyōto was just at the height of its glory of blossoms. They left on the same day, Hōnen Sama for Tosa and the superior for the north country.

Ryōkan. What's Hōnen Sama doing now, I wonder?

Jien. He's dead. The news came when we were on pilgrimage in the province of Kōzuke. The superior fell in the road and wept.

Ryōkan. Then they had truly parted for life, hadn't they?

Jien. Yes. (*Wipes his tears with the sleeve of his robe. Both are silent for a moment.*)

Ryōkan. Daylight is still far off, isn't it?

Jien. It's only a little past midnight.

Ryōkan. It's so cold it doesn't seem we'll be able to sleep at all.

Jien. But if we don't sleep a little, we'll be tired out by to-morrow's journey.

Ryōkan. Then shall we try to get a wink? (*Both lie down and close their eyes.*)

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Saemon (groaning). O-o-h, o-o-h.

Okane (sitting up.) Saemon Dono! Saemon Dono!
(*She shakes SAEMON awake.*)

Saemon (opening his eyes). Ah, was it a dream?
(*Sits stupidly looking about him.*)

Okane. You groaned frightfully.

Saemon. Ah, I dreamed a frightful dream.

Okane. Unable to sleep a wink, I lay drowsing, when suddenly you gave a strange cry and groaned, and I was startled.

Saemon. H'm. (*Thinks.*)

Okane. I was frightened. Your face was terrible when you opened your eyes and looked at me.

Saemon. Rather than terrible, it was a weird and evil dream. It went to the bottom of my soul.

(*With a serious face, SAEMON sits following out the thread of his dream.*)

Okane. What sort of dream? Please tell me. I'm worried about something myself.

Saemon (sitting on the bed). I dreamed I was killing a chicken. It was in the cool shade of a bamboo grove. With one foot on a big log that had been rolled there, I held the bird's two wings and head together with one hand and was plucking its feathers one at a time from its tail and breast with the other. The chicken seemed to be in pain, for every time I pulled out a feather, it drew up its feet and strained hard with its head, but since its neck

was twisted round, it couldn't cry. Soon its yellow and spotted body was stripped bare from tail to breast. That featherless body made me feel cynical and cruel.

Okane. Gracious, it's horrible. You're always killing chickens; that's why you dream such dreams.

Saemon. Then I had to pick the wings. I seized one wing and one leg, and pushing the chicken down on the ground, pulled with might and main. The wing feathers were big and like little bones, you see, so they wouldn't come out with ordinary pulling. Every time I pulled one out, the bird cried pitifully.

Okane. There's nothing hurts me so much as that cry. For it seems that you might pick them after you've killed them.

Saemon. Then the feathers come out hard and, worst of all, the meat loses its flavor. When I heard that cry in my dream, I somehow felt cruelly happy. So I let the head loose and began to pick the feathers out slowly one by one. Then you came running.

Okane. Dear, it's terrible. Was I in it, too?

Saemon. Yes. You said, "For heaven's sake, stop making it cry." So I twisted its neck round and round. I felt just as if I were wringing a towel. Then pressing its head down against its back, squeezing its abdomen with one hand and standing with legs wide apart, I held it firm for a moment. For the chicken would have breathed spitefully through

the other end. When I thought it was dead, the thing, which with its feathers out, no longer looked like a chicken, ran away six or seven feet.

Okane. Stop, please. It's truly terrible.

Saemon. What happened next was ghastly. Excited, I seized the chicken and, thinking this time to cut its head off, got a big knife and, holding the bird to the ground with my foot, was about to strike. The chicken looked up at me with strange eyes. And it cried continually in a feeble and accusing voice. Then in the dream I suddenly became that chicken myself. Terrified, I cried out at the top of my voice. The chicken killer stood looking coldly down into my face. Growing too weak to scream, I raised a pitiful, pleading voice. Then I felt somehow that this same thing had happened once before. "Hello," thought I, "isn't that a voice I've heard before?" Then a scene long forgotten came with surprising clearness into the memory of that chicken, which was I. For away back in the past in the life before this, I once had killed a woman traveler. In the midst of the mountains, I bared my dirk and rushed upon her. She cried in a pleading voice. What I now remembered was that cry. "Now," thought I, "retribution for that has come." The knife of the butcher was about to fall, but fell not. Then I groaned and opened my eyes.

Okane. What a weird and terrible dream!
(*Shivers.*)

Saemon. It was frightful when I remembered the scene of my evil day in the former world. It was sickeningly clear. "Ah," I felt, "this is Hell." When I think of it even now, it sends a chill to the bottom of my soul. (*His face is pale.*)

Okane. To-night I somehow feel queer. I haven't been able to sleep a bit since coming to bed, and I've been troubled by all sorts of thoughts. In fact, I've been thinking about my dead mother. It's a strange thing to tell, but listen. I somehow feel that that priest who was here this evening is my mother reborn.

Saemon. What nonsense! That's impossible.

Okane. My mother was deeply pious like that, you know. And a little before she died, she said to me, "Anyway this time I can't be saved. When I die I shall be born again in the form of a priest. Please remember this well. For I shall come to your door as a pilgrim." She said it seriously. Since then I haven't been able to treat mendicant priests badly. I think of her words, you see.

Matsuwaka (*opening his eyes*). Is it time to get up?

Okane. No. It's still night. Don't get up, for it's cold. (*Puts a wadded quilt over him.*)

Matsuwaka. Is it? (*Goes to sleep again.*)

(*The two sit in silence. The wind is heard passing outside.*)

Saemon. I wonder what became of the priests this evening.

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Okane. They're probably lost in the snow.

Saemon. I feel bad about it. I was drunk with *saké*, you see. I was a little too cruel. (*Thinks.*)

Okane. You struck the priest with his staff, didn't you?

Saemon. I did wrong.

Okane. As I looked on this evening, I didn't think you did well. It wasn't only your roughness, you see. It was your sarcasm, your insinuation and your crabbed coolness, those things you always detest.

Saemon. I agree with you. This evening I wasn't myself at all.

Okane. In addition, that priest seemed to be a good man. There was nothing affected about him and he maintained a humble attitude. I liked him and wanted to give him a place to stay, but you wouldn't listen to reason at all.

Saemon. He seemed somewhat different from ordinary priests.

Okane. His address was noble and not the least abashed. Rather did I blush with shame to have you show off your manners before him.

Saemon. I did very badly, didn't I?

Okane. And he found interest in what you said and listened attentively. Rather he listened with an expression of loving good-will.

Saemon. I wasn't unaware of that myself.

Okane. You were truly pathetic. He was not put out by your sarcasm, but rather seemed to be looking at you with compassionate eyes.

Saemon (blushing). Even to such words I can but listen.

Okane. His disciples begged earnestly, saying that they could sleep outside the house, only they didn't want their master to get cold, but you maintained a chilly attitude. I pitied them.

Saemon. I wonder why I was like that. Could I have had an evil spirit within me?

Okane. Worst of all, you struck him with his staff. When you did that, the old disciple wept. When the young one got angry and grasped his staff, the priest stopped him. He wore an expression of authority.

(*SAEMON sits silently with folded arms.*)

Okane. I ran out and, rubbing his shoulder unconsciously, begged his forgiveness. For he was so pitiable.

Saemon. What did he say then?

Okane. He said it was nothing; when he went out on pilgrimages, he often met with such things.

Saemon. After that I wonder what he did. Surely he cursed me. (*Thinks.*) Won't you go and call him back? I can't bear to think of that priest traveling in the snow cursing me with a curse that a lifetime can't dissolve.

Okane. No. When I asked him not to curse my husband, he said not to worry, that he rather thought you a sincere man.

Saemon. Did he say that? (*Tearfully.*) Please bring him back again. I can't rest unless I apologize.

Okane. Is there any use searching for him at this snowy midnight hour without the least idea where to look?

Saemon. I can't bear to part like this forever.

Okane. But it can't be helped.

Saemon. May they not possibly be out by the gate yet?

Okane. Do you think such a thing possible? If they stood in such a place, they'd freeze to death.

Saemon. Anyway, since I can't rest, go and look.

Okane. I'll go and look, but it's no use. (*Lights a hand-lamp, goes down into the yard and, opening the gate, peers outside.*) Oh! (*Screams. Rushes out through the gate. Then hurries into the house again.*) *Saemon* Dono! Please come, please come quickly. (*Rushes out. SAEMON follows with a tense and ashen face. MATSUWAKA, awakened by his mother's voice, runs out after his father. The three priests open their eyes in surprise and stand up.*)

Okane. My, are you here yet? In this snow-storm? In the middle of the night like this? My, what's this? You must be cold. Freezing cold.

Saemon (to SHINRAN). I— I— (*Weeps.*) Please forgive me. (*Kneels down in the snow.*)

(SHINRAN *is moved. He becomes a little nervous. Then without a word, he strokes SAEMON's shoulder.*)

Okane. He's a good man at heart. He's a good man at heart, you see.

Jien (*tearfully and in a low voice*). Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu!

Ryōkan. Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu!

(*All are under the influence of strange and strained emotions. They remain in silence for a moment.*)

Okane. Please all come into the house. Warm yourselves at the hearth, please. You must be cold. In the middle of the night like this! With nothing but thin robes on! Really, please come in. (*Brushes the snow from SHINRAN's robe.*) There's such a lot of snow on you. (*Goes in.*)

(SAEMON *goes in after her. SHINRAN, JIEN and RYŌKAN go in silently and, brushing the snow off their robes at the gate, stand in the yard.*)

Saemon (*stepping up into the front room*). Please come in. Okane, put on a lot of wood.

Okane (*putting on wood*). Please come in. Please dry your robes beside the hearth.

Shinran (*to the disciples*). Then let's go in. (*He takes off his straw sandals, steps up into the room and goes to the fireside. JIEN and RYŌKAN follow his example.*)

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Saemon. This evening I behaved cruelly. I'd been drinking *saké* and was mad. Of late I'm always mad. I did wrong. I'm ashamed. I spoke sarcastically and sneered. (*Grows eager.*) That troubles me most. You must have thought me a despicable knave. And I can't help it if you did. I've always despised such things. But last night there was some strange power within me, and I was driven to act like that. I couldn't fight against that power.

Shinran. That was the working of your karma. When men do evil, they're all forced to it by that power. None of them can fight against it. (*Pauses.*) I didn't think you despicable. Rather, I thought you sincere.

Saemon. Thank you. When I'd pronounced one curse, the next one mounted spontaneously to my lips. Until I'd reviled you to the full, I couldn't stop. After I'd sent you out, I began at once to regret it in my heart. But temporizing, I beguiled myself with drunkenness. This morning I was ridden by a fearful dream and woke. My drunkenness had already cooled away. I thought again of what I'd done in the evening. And my heart was filled with the pain of sharp regret and the desire to make amends. I wondered what I should do if things ended there without my begging forgiveness. It was then we found you freezing in the snow. Please forgive me.

Shinran. Buddha forgives you, I'm sure. That your heart may be at rest, I'll say that I forgive you, too. If you've done me any wrong. But I've no desire to judge you. In the first place, I have no such worth. Last night when I heard you speak for the first time, I understood the goodness of your heart at once. I faced you with a loving heart. But you wouldn't receive me. At that time I felt resentment toward you. When I was driven out, my heart was angered. If it hadn't been for your wife's intercession, I might have cursed you. I promised her positively that I wouldn't. But as the night grew late and the cold began to eat into my body, my heart began to hate you. I didn't say my prayers with the beautiful heart of a Buddha at all. First of all, I was about to be overcome by bodily anguish. And then I had to fight against my desire to curse you. My heart was held captive by sin and pain.

Saemon. Your words are different from those of the priests I've heard before. You talk as if you're a bad man yourself.

Shinran. I'm convinced I am a bad man. It's true. I'm all but an irredeemable sinner. My heart would curse another child of Buddha like myself. My flesh would eat another child of Buddha like myself. If I'm not a bad man, what am I?

Jien. The master always talks like this.

Okane. Saemon Dono always talks that way, too.

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Shinran (to SAEMON). You've put your mind on a good thing. Your idea's right.

Saemon. Then aren't you troubled? When I think, I become desperate. I have a heart that loves good. But I can't live without working evil. And I can't help thinking of that evil. "This is fearful," I think to myself. I feel the unreasonableness of it. Because there's nothing else for it, I sometimes feel like telling myself to go ahead and be bad.

Okane. Saemon Dono says he'll harden himself into a strong man who can bear evil and is going to accustom himself to cruelty deliberately. Yet he's always blaming his own heart. Thus goaded by pain, he gets desperate and turns to *saki*. He goes on getting rougher and rougher till I'm truly worried.

Saemon. For if I absolutely must be bad, I hate to think of being insulted by other bad men, you see. And again I don't want to think myself good. I feel that I want to call myself a villain and go about desolating society. (*Pauses.*) Honest priest. Teach me, please; do Paradise and Hell really exist?

Shinran. I believe they do. First of all I feel that there's no reason why there shouldn't be a Hell. When I've injured the life of another and haven't been able to wipe out that injury, I feel like crying out to somebody, "Please flog me, please punish me." I haven't been able to find any way to make compensation. And when I've done something cruel, I feel

that it can't be left unpunished. This is the actual experience of my soul.

Saemon. I felt that way a while ago. If I should have no opportunity to apologize to you, and things should end where they were, if you'd gone on your way never to take back your curse, I felt that surely the evil I'd done would go solemnly on forever unextinguished. And I always feel this whenever I kill a chicken. Can such things go unpunished? When I think how I struck you, I feel like saying, "Please beat me."

Shinran. I think there must be a Hell. And then, at the same time, I think there must of necessity be a way of escape from that Hell. I feel that if there isn't, this world must be a lie. I feel that this existence could not be. We're born. And this world exists. Then, this world must be a harmonious whole. It must be possible for us to be saved somewhere. I feel that it must. When we repent and confess our sins, is there not in our feelings a sense of the existence of Paradise somewhere? We're all sitting about the fire like this talking intimately. Those who were fighting before are now mutually forgiving. Somehow I feel as if I want to cry. Don't you feel that there must be a Paradise somewhere?

Saemon. I feel that way, too. But such feelings are soon upset. Whenever I run into a new happening, my mind immediately changes. And in my

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heart as before, hate and anger stand victors. And I'm filled wholly by a feeling which proves the existence of Hell.

Shinran. I'm like that, too. That's the true condition of man's heart. The human heart changes according to its stimulations. The wise men of old referred to that when they used the words "fickle groundlings." Our hearts are as easily scattered as the leaves of a tree before the wind.

Saemon. And the organization of this world compels us to sin. I tried hard to make a living as a good man. But for that I was injured by the men of this world. Then I knew that I couldn't possibly make a living. It was either die or become a beggar. But I won't die. I love my wife and child. And I can't bear to stand before detestable men's gates begging for pity. There's no other way for me but to be a bad man. But I hate that, too. My heart always blames me.

Shinran. Your anguish is the anguish all men must bear. Only hypocrites are without it. Men who, longing to be good, can bear to look honestly into their own hearts, verily suffer as you do. I consider your anguish noble. From the time I took to the priesthood at the age of nine, through long tens of years, I trained myself on Mt. Hiei and at Nara in an effort to make myself good. How I suffered, trying to cut the curse away from my heart! But my

hope was not fulfilled. I knew that my fate would not allow that in this life. I lost hope. This is what I believe. Man can't make himself wholly good. He can't leave other lives entirely uninjured. He's made that sort of thing.

Saemon. This is the first time I've ever heard that sort of talk from a priest like you. Then are all men bad? Are you, too?

Shinran. I'm the greatest of sinners. The more I meet my destiny, the better I understand the depth of my sin. To the extent that the appearance of good unrolls itself in my heart, my wickedness, which I haven't noticed before, becomes plain.

Saemon. You said there was a Hell.

Shinran. I believe there is.

Saemon (looking serious). Then won't you have to descend into it?

Shinran. If I'm like this, I shall. I don't think that unreasonable.

Saemon. Aren't you afraid?

Shinran. I am. Day and night I tremble with that fear. All my life I've not doubted the existence of Hell. When I played with my friends as a child, we sang, "Saint Mokuren's mother, for her cross heart, got the car of fire." I was unbearably afraid of that song. I've had this horror ever since then. "How can I escape from Hell?" I've thought in agony. It would be all right if I did no evil, if I

accumulated good, I was taught. I tried hard to do as I was told. Then I put myself through religious austerities with pain and hardship. I tortured myself sorely at that. Once in the time of snow I went back and forth in pilgrimage between Mt. Hiei and the Rokkakudō, which is eight and three-quarters miles away, every night for a hundred nights in succession. But for every merit I accumulated, ten evils grew, just as it is in the Sai-no-Kawara, where no matter how many stones the children pile and pile, the devils come and knock them down. The wickedness twining about in my heart proved to me more and more clearly the existence of Hell. And I lost all hope of escaping from that evil. I decided that in the end I must go to Hell.

Sacmon. I'm terrified. As I listen to you, I can't doubt the existence of Hell. A sharp and deep-rooted power in the depths of my soul presses upon me. My fate has spoilt me with the thought that there might be no Hell. To-day I was asked by my boy whether Hell and Paradise are true and I said they were lies, made-up stories, but I lacked assurance. I added jokingly that there might be just a Hell and laughed, but really I felt that there probably is, and was strangely uneasy. Having met and talked to you, I've lost all desire to be flippant. The deep wisdom of my soul's been summoned and awakened. And the fear of Hell assaults me.

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Okane. I somehow feel very uncomfortable at the story of last night's dream.

Saemon (as the noise of the tempest passes outside). Is there no way to escape that Hell?

Shinran. If it were necessary to become good to reach Paradise, there would be no hope. But even in my wickedness, I can by another way get to Paradise, I believe. That way is love. It's forgiveness. It's the power that makes it possible to go beyond good and bad. This world's supported by that power. It's deeper than the distinction between good and evil, but it also gives birth to good and evil. Up to this time, priests have taught that Paradise is to be attained through good actions. I no longer believe that. If that's so, I go to Hell. But the Buddha saves us in our evil. He forgives our sins. That's the love of Buddha. I believe in that. If I didn't, I couldn't live.

Saemon (with sparkling eyes). Though one take life, though one whore?

Shinran. Though one commit the ten sins and the five disobediences.

Ryōkan. His compassion is uniform.

Jien. Reliance on a power outside ourselves is the way of salvation opened up by our master.

(SAEMON sits in silence with a pale and serious face.)

Then he begins to speak in a voice strained with a great emotion.)

Saemon. I have a strange feeling. I feel as if I've suddenly heard the voice of a great and mysterious bell. It resounded clearly away down into the bottom of my soul. I have an intimate and responsive feeling as if that for which I've long waited has finally come. I'm full of thanks. I'm able to believe in that salvation at once. That's why. It's not a lie. It must be true. I've become aware of it. It's mine now, as if I'd known it before. It's wholly mine now. I feel thankful and as if I want to cry.

Shinran. That's true. When I met Hōnen Shōnin at Yoshimizu, that salvation entered into me all at once. I felt just as you do now. It was as if I'd recalled a thing forgotten. It was truly a simple thing. It seemed strange that everybody didn't understand this near-at-hand and simple fact. Look at the reality of our souls. We love. We forgive. We pardon others' faults. Then our hearts are most peaceful. We do but evil. We hate and curse. But in the midst of the diverse workings of our soiled hearts, we know love. And we forgive. We all know the thankfulness and tears of those moments. The fundamental truth of our salvation is the same simple law. That simple thing is resurrected again from the depths of our souls. And it becomes faith.

Jien. You've tortured yourself sincerely for a long time. You've examined your own heart faithfully. The steps taken by your heart have been ample preparation for acceptance of faith in the saving grace of another.

Ryōkan. When the necessity arises of that which went before giving place to that which is to follow, then it's as easy to make the sure transition as for water to flow to lower levels.

Shinran. I believe your faith is firm.

Saemon. To-night I'm happy. I feel as if the peace that's been absent from my soul for years has now come back. (*His eyes become moist.*)

Okane. Really that's true. For a long, long time now your richness and peace of heart have been gone.

Shinran. You said you were trying to accustom yourself to evil, didn't you?

Saemon. My native spirit's too weak. That making it hard for me to get along in the world, I thought I must become a worse man.

Okane. So he began to hunt, to kill chickens and to quarrel with the farmers.

Shinran. I sympathize with your feelings. But that's unreasonable. Haven't you thought of the thing called karma? Though a man work to make himself bad, he can't get bad that way. And again, in the hands of his fate, he'll commit the most

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heinous crimes. Please don't be unreasonable, but follow obediently the true dictates of your heart. Since your nature's good, you can't help it.

Saemon. Then is it unreasonable to strive to be good?

Shinran. If a desire to be good wells in the heart, it isn't unreasonable. When I say "obediently", I mean to follow the true inwardness of the soul. It's natural for man's soul to be good. But obstructed by his accumulated karma, he's not able to fulfil the soul's desires. We're being punished. We can't put off evil. Redemption means our salvation with the evil in us. But I can never lose my desire to become good. It's determined that I can never attain that desire on earth. By repeating Amida's prayer, I believe I can satisfy that longing when I leave this world as spirit. I mean to carry it with me till I die.

Saemon. Won't it be impossible to make a living in the world?

Shinran. Not to make a living is natural. It's natural for a good man to be poor. If you grow poor naturally, since there's nothing else to do, please grow poor. Man's able to live, no matter how. In the sutras it's written that Idaten speeds about through the three worlds gathering food and raiment for the children of Buddha and nourishing them. Oshaka Sama, too, went about as a mendicant. I also am walking as a pilgrim, as you see.

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But I've lived up to this day. My son's living, somehow, too.

Okane. Have you a son?

Shinran. Yes. I left him in Kyōto. I parted from him when he was six and haven't seen him since.

Okane. Dear! And his mother?

Shinran. We parted when I left Kyōto, and she died when I was in Echigo.

Okane. And you weren't with her at the hour of death?

Jien. For the sake of the law, the master incurred the displeasure of the authorities and was exiled. When his wife died, since he was in disfavor, he couldn't go back. She was only twenty-six when she died.

Ryōkan. Her name was Tamahi and she was a beautiful woman. After that, his affliction was tremendous. Anyway, for the son of a prince—

Shinran. Don't speak of that.

Okane (*tearfully*). Surely you must long to see your son!

Shinran. Yes. At times I worry about him.

Okane. Of course you do.

Shinran. (*to MATSUWAKA*). How old are you?

Matsuwaka (*blushing*). Eleven.

Shinran. You're a good boy. (*Pats his head.*)

Saemon. We're troubled because he's a little sickly.

Shinran. Truly his color's a little bad, isn't it?
(*They all remain silent for a moment.*)

Shinran. Ryōkan, just look in my box. A while ago when the staff struck, there was a strange sound, and possibly—

Ryōkan (opens the box and looks in). Oh, the image of Amida's broken! (*Takes out a little figure of Amida Nyorai.*)

Jien. The left hand's gone, isn't it?

Saemon (blanching). Show me. (*Looks fixedly at the little Buddha. Great tears roll down his cheeks.*)

Shinran. Saemon Dono, what's the matter?
(*All look at SAEMON.*)

Saemon. I can't bear it. See the nobility of this little carved face. I broke this sacred image with the blow of a staff. This beautiful left hand. This hand so exquisitely carved, down to each separate finger. I'm made suddenly aware of the coarseness of my soul. I've done an evil thing. The depth of my karma's fearful. I struck Shinran Sama. I reviled his disciples. And I crippled Buddha's image. I—I—(*Weeps.*)

Shinran. Saemon Dono, don't cry. The mercy of Buddha will forgive you, deep in sin as you are. I'll give you this image as a remembrance. When you see it, please think of the depth of your karma. And believe in the Buddha who forgives his children

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heavily burdened with sin. And, with the same heart, please love your neighbors. (*Pauses.*) Day will soon break. We must be going. We must be off on the morrow's journey. Ryōkan, Jien, please make ready. (*SHINRAN stands up.*)

Saemon (*seizing the sleeve of SHINRAN's robe*). Please wait. I'll become a priest. I'll go with you hereafter. Please lead me on forever.

Shinran (*moved*). I know your heart. My tears flow. But give up your idea. The worship of the Jōdo sect is family worship. It's the worship of the merchant as a merchant and the hunter as a hunter. Wherefore I, too, marry and eat flesh. I'm not a monk. A family man, I have the heart of a recluse. One mustn't be captured by forms. The heart's the important thing.

Saemon. But it's painful to part with you like this. I don't know whether we'll ever be able to meet again.

Okane. At least please stay with us four or five days.

Shinran. Those who meet must part in the end. That's the law of this world. When your heart turns to me, please recite, "Namu Amida Butsu." I dwell within that.

Saemon. Then must you go, positively?

Shinran. If fate permits, I'll see you again.

Okane. Where'll you go from here?

Shinran. I have no fixed destination.

(SHINRAN, JIEN and RYŌKAN make themselves ready and go out. Day is beginning to break. SAEMON and OKANE go to the gate. MATSUWAKA, too, his hand in his mother's, goes out to see them off.)

Shinran. I've parted like this with many, many people. In my heart are the faces of people I can never forget. To-day I add you to that group. I shan't forget you. Though separated from you, I shall pray for you.

Saemon. And I shall never forget you all my life. I shall pray for you.

Okane. Please take good care of yourself. (*Her eyes fill with tears.*)

Jien. Day's begun to break.

Ryōkan. And the snow seems to have stopped.

Shinran. Then sayōnara.

Saemon. Sayōnara.

Okane. Sayōnara. (*To MATSUWAKA.*) Come, say sayōnara.

Matsuwaka. Uncle, sayōnara.

Shinran (*folding MATSUWAKA in the sleeve of his robe*). Sayōnara. Please grow up big and great.

Jien. Sayōnara.

Ryōkan. Sayōnara.

(*Exeunt SHINRAN, JIEN and RYŌKAN. SAEMON, OKANE and MATSUWAKA watch them go with tearful eyes.*)

ACT II

PERSONS IN THE ACT

SHINRAN, aged 75.

MATSUWAKA, now called YUIEN, aged 25.

Three Priests.

Six Pilgrims.

A Wife.

A Maid.

Two Shop-boys, aged 12 or 13.

(The priests' quarters at Nishi-no-Tōin. A waiting room at the back of the main hall. It is in a high building from which the streets of Kyōto are visible. There is a road immediately beneath. People are passing. It is an afternoon in autumn fifteen years later than the events in Act I. The three Priests are talking together.)

First Priest. We have yet a little leisure before the services, haven't we?

Second Priest. They'll begin shortly. The main hall's already packed with worshipers.

Third Priest. The prosperity of this sect's ever surprisingly great, isn't it?

First Priest. Many who can't squeeze into the hall have overflowed into the corridors. No wonder, for to-day's is the mass in honor of the so deeply revered Hōnen Shōnin Sama.

Second Priest. It's well. For during his lifetime, was he not worshiped as the living Buddha of Kuro-dani? When he was exiled to Tosa, from Shichijō to Toba all along the road traversed by his palanquin, old and young, men and women, stood like walls and saw him off with weeping eyes.

Third Priest. At that time I accompanied him as far as the South Gate in Toba. From there he went by river boat. His beloved form as he stepped from the palanquin into the boat garbed in a long robe of light blue silk with a ceremonial hat on his long white hair, is still as vivid to me as if actually before my eyes.

First Priest. It's been twenty-three years since he passed away, hasn't it? How time flies! That we're old's no wonder, is it?

Second Priest. Both Hōnen Shōnin Sama and the superior suffered great hardships, didn't they? To-day's prosperity's due to their labors, isn't it? \

Third Priest. If Hōnen Sama could see the power of the Jōdo sect to-day, he'd surely be pleased, wouldn't he?

Second Priest. The superior himself's aged greatly, hasn't he?

First Priest. Isn't it likely that his present indisposition's serious?

Second Priest. No, it's nothing but a cold.

Third Priest. Being old, he must take good care of himself.

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First Priest. With Yuien Dono carefully looking after his needs, all's well.

Second Priest. Despite his youth, Yuien Dono's most faithfully attentive in all things.

Third Priest. He's so gentle and mild-spirited, isn't he?

First Priest. And the superior seems to love him exceedingly.

Second Priest. He asks Yuien Dono to look after all his personal affairs.

(Enter YUIEN. Walks along the corridor toward the main hall. Speaks to the Priests.)

Yuien. Excuse me, please.

Third Priest. Yuien Dono.

Yuien. Yes. *(Stops.)*

First Priest. Are you in a hurry?

Yuien. No. Not particularly. I was just going into the main hall.

Second Priest. Then please come here a moment. I have something I want to talk to you about.

Third Priest. While we wait for the service to begin, let's brew up some tea and talk.

(YUIEN goes to the Priests and sits down. The Third Priest pours out tea and offers it to him.)

First Priest. How's the superior?

Yuien. Now he's asleep.

Second Priest. I suppose there's no cause for anxiety in his condition, is there?

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Yuien. No, he's practically all right, now. To-day he said he would get up and conduct the service, as it's the important anniversary service for Hōnen Sama. I persuaded him to give up the idea and take care of himself. He already gets up and walks in the garden.

Third Priest. That's good. No harm must come to his body.

First Priest. For unlike ours, his is precious, isn't it?

Second Priest. He's truly the pillar of our sect.

Third Priest. After the death of Hōnen Shōnin, when the enemies of the law were many, it was the great virtue of the superior that made it possible for him to shoulder the Jōdo sect and bring about to-day's prosperity.

First Priest. If worst should come to worst with the superior now, our sect would fall into darkness.

Second Priest. We and our countless followers would lose our good light and go astray.

Third Priest. With his son Zenran, on whom we should have to depend, such a man as he is.

First Priest. With the succession of the law in this sect lying in his person, it's too bad that he should turn his back on his father.

Second Priest. His disposition's exactly the opposite of his father's and most unruly.

Third Priest. He's an unnatural child, isn't he?

Yuien. I hope his father's displeasure will quickly melt away.

First Priest. No, it seems to me natural, while his conduct's such as it is, his father's displeasure should not melt. If such a son receives the succession, it'll injure the fame of our sect.

Second Priest. I believe it'll prove an obstacle to our propaganda.

Third Priest. Already the world reproaches us, saying that our philosophy sweeps away all idea of good.

Yuien. Zenran Sama's a good man. He's no such man as you think. After I'd had a little talk with him, I liked him at once. What he's done, I don't know, but I can't think he's bad.

First Priest. So you say, but Zenran Sama not only dissipates and conducts himself evilly, but he's opposed to the faith of the Jōdo sect.

Second Priest. If he's profligate, probably there's no way for him to get to Paradise but through the Jōdo faith.

Third Priest. Then he doesn't give himself up to evil in the belief that he can be saved even if he be bad, it seems to me.

First Priest. I was under the same illusion as you were. But we both seem to have been wrong. That's why I can't understand him.

Second Priest. Then the superior's anger's not unreasonable, is it?

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Yuien. There's no telling how the superior's troubled in private about Zenran Sama.

Third Priest. But if he goes on like this, there's not the least likelihood of his father's displeasure being dissipated, is there? Anyway it's a long separation dating from way back in the Inada days.

Yuien. It's said that Zenran Sama will soon come up to the capital from Inada.

First Priest. It isn't at all likely his farther'll see him.

Yuien. I entreat you to intercede in his behalf and arrange a meeting for him.

Second Priest. We seldom do such things. We'd be scolded.

Third Priest. Unless he reforms, it would rather be to his disadvantage.

Yuien. I'm grieved.

(All fall silent for a moment.)

First Priest. Who preaches to-day?

Second Priest. It's my turn.

Third Priest. What do you intend to talk about?

Second Priest. About the ecstasy of the law. The joy of those who believe in the salvation of Buddha, the feeling of dancing exultation mentioned in the sutras. I need not wealth, I want not fame; I have within me the delight of the law more joyous than these. For with that delight, indeed, have I lived up till now in black robes and poverty.

First Priest. It is true, verily. I feel no envy for the finery of others. For I believe that in my heart I wear invisible brocades.

Second Priest. To-day I intend to say this: Do you all know the sweetness of this delight of the law? If not, though you've heaped up abundant wealth, I assure you that you're poor. (*Raises his eyebrows.*)

Third Priest. That's a courageous and strong declaration.

Second Priest. Young men and women, I shall say. Do you all know this sweetness of the joy of the law? If not, though you be intoxicated with glad love, you're pitiful folk, I assure you.

Third Priest. The young people will most likely prick up their ears, won't they?

Second Priest. Take everything from me, I shall say. Riches, fame, love. But leave me this joy of the law alone. To have that taken away would be to me the same as death.

First Priest. I have a happy feeling, as if you're saying exactly what I wish to say.

Third Priest. I feel that way, too. For without that joy we'd surely be in a sad plight, wouldn't we? There's no man so poor as a priest, is there? I, too, live by that delight.

Second Priest. I intend to say that this joy's the proof of our salvation. We found not our hope on this world of woe, but cling to expectations of the

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pure lotus land. Though we fall ill, we fear not death. Death to us isn't loss, but gain. For we go to live in the land of bliss. I shall speak of such things.

Third Priest. That's all true. It's the actual experience of all believers.

First Priest. Through the ages the founders of temples have spent lives of poverty, but their appearance of calmness and wealth has all been due to this feeling of exultation in their hearts, I believe.

Second Priest. Yuien Dono. What are you pondering over?

Third Priest. You're most glum.

First Priest. Your color's bad, too. Aren't you sick?

Yuien. No, only somehow my spirit's heavy.

Third Priest. When your spirits are low like this, try sitting down before Buddha and repeating the invocation. Your mind'll become clear and serene.

Yuien. Will it?

First Priest. It's good to recite the sutras in a loud voice.

Second Priest. For one thing, it's probably the fault of insufficient faith. Don't be offended. I speak because I'm an old man, you see. But if you've accepted the mercy of Buddha, you ought always to be happy. You must always be full of hope. Again, if you think of the hardships borne by Buddha through

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millions of eternities, your heart must always overflow with thanks to him and compassionate love for all living things. I think lack of ecstasy is proof that faith hasn't yet been attained. Don't feel bad. Nay, in youth everybody's like that.

First Priest. Hello, the bell's ringing for the service to begin.

Second Priest. I must go to the hall.

Third Priest. Then let's go together. Yuien Dono?

Yuien. I must wait on the superior.

(The three Priests go out. YUIEN remains silent for a moment. At last he puts the tea things in order, stands up, goes out into the corridor, leans against a pillar and looks vacantly down on the road below. Enter a merchant's Wife and her Maid at the far end of the road.)

Wife. To-day many people have come to worship, haven't they?

Maid. Because it's fine weather, isn't it?

Wife. There's much dust in the air. *(Frowns.)*

Maid. Your hair's white with it.

Wife. Is it? *(Takes out a towel and wipes her hair.)* Since we've walked a little hurriedly, I'm covered with sweat. *(Wipes her forehead and neck.)*

Maid. Really it's a little too hot, isn't it?

Wife. You've got incense, rice-bag, flowers and everything, haven't you?

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Maid. Every single thing just so.

Wife. Dear me, the bell's ringing for the service.

Maid. We're just in time.

Wife. Let's hurry into the hall.

(They go out at the other end of the road. Enter SHINRAN.)

Shinran (standing behind YUIEN). Yuien, Yuien.
(YUIEN looks round, sees SHINRAN and blushes.) What are you doing there?

Yuien. Looking vacantly at people passing along the street.

Shinran. To-day the weather's fine, isn't it?

Yuien. It's rather hot for autumn.

Shinran. There are many worshipers, aren't there?

Yuien. Yes. From here we can see all sorts of people pass.

(Enter two Shop-boys. They wear stiff sashes, aprons and white two-toed socks. One pulls and the other pushes on a cart loaded with a bamboo box bearing the mark of some merchant.)

First Shop-boy. Let's go more slowly.

Second Shop-boy. But if we're late, we'll be scolded again.

First Shop-boy. I'm tired.

Second Shop-boy. If you fall asleep again as you did last night, you'll catch it.

First Shop-boy. But I was so sleepy I couldn't help it.

Second Shop-boy. It's awfully hot, isn't it? (*Wipes off the perspiration with his hand.*)

First Shop-boy. Don't flap your sandals like that.

Second Shop-boy. Swarms of people, aren't there?

First Shop-boy. They're all going to the temple.

Second Shop-boy. Shan't we go have a look at the show banners?

First Shop-boy (stopping as if somewhat tempted).
But we'll be scolded if we're late, so let's hurry along.
(*They go out.*)

Shinran. We can see various phases of life here. I've always felt lonesome when looking at people passing by.

Yuien. I, too, have had the same feeling for some time.

Shinran. Shall we rest here for a while?

Yuien. I'd like to. (*Brings a cushion and puts it on the floor.*) It's very fine to-day and see how distinctly Mt. Hiei stands out.

Shinran (sitting down). In that mountain there are many men practising religious austerities even now.

Yuien. In the early days you also were on that mountain for a long time, weren't you?

Shinran. I first went up at the age of nine, and from that time till I met Hōnen Sama when I was twenty-nine, I was training myself there most of the time.

Yuien. Surely you recall the things of those days, don't you?

Shinran. I can never forget them. For what with youthful devotion and aspiration, I earnestly and whole-heartedly tormented my soul. Sometimes I mused calmly in the woods, and sometimes I read the sutras hungrily. And evenings I gazed down on the darkening streets of Kyōto and thought yearningly lonely thoughts.

Yuien. Then you were in the mountain at my age. How did you feel living there?

Shinran. When I was your age, I was gradually oppressed by uneasy feelings. Those were my bitter days. For though I read and read the sutras, they didn't bring solace to my soul. Moreover, I had to get on absolutely alone cherishing my uneasiness in my breast.

Yuien. Weren't there many young men of about the same age practising religious austerities near you?

Shinran. There were hundreds of them. They were of all sorts, some heroic men who mortified their bodies, some who studied hard, hardly sleeping nights, and some who kept themselves pure like godly hermits. I wasn't behind the rest in the practice of these things. Indeed, I did most desperate penances. But in my heart there lay a lonesomeness of which I couldn't speak to them. I felt a yearning for the love and sorrow of man's life. I kept it in my own

breast for fear that it would not be heeded or would be despised. That loneliness grew and grew unperceived of others in my heart. A little before the time I finally came down off the mountain, I even felt that my heart would break with this loneliness.

Yuien. Master. These days I somehow feel unbearably lonely. Sometimes I'm abstracted. To-day as I stood here gazing down upon the people passing, tears came unbidden to my eyes.

Shinran (*looking into YUIEN's face*). Most likely. (*Pauses.*) For you're sensitive.

Yuien. There's no special reason. But I feel lonely and sad. Sometimes I feel as if I'd like to cry my eyes out. Eiren says it's probably due to my weak body. I, too, wonder if it may not be that. But I can't help thinking that's not all. I can't understand my own heart. Is it all right for me to feel lonely?

Shinran. Your loneliness is natural. When you're lonely, there's nothing to do but to feel lonely.

Yuien. Will I get over it by and by?

Shinran. I wonder. You may feel more lonely. Now you feel a dreamy loneliness, but afterwards you may come to feel a hungry loneliness.

Yuien. Don't you feel lonely?

Shinran. I'm lonely, too. I think I'll be lonely all my life. Of course my loneliness now is different from yours.

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Yuien. How are they different ?

Shinran (*looking at YUIEN compassionately*). Yours may be cured by its objects, but mine's already beyond cure by anything. It's the destined loneliness of human life. It's a thing you can't understand until you've experienced life. Your present loneliness will gradually take shape and form about a center. After that loneliness has been endured, true loneliness will come. Such loneliness as I now feel. But such things as this can't be understood through words. You'll come to know them for yourself.

Yuien. Then what should I do?

Shinran. When you're lonely, it's all right to feel lonely. Life's training you. Only do everything earnestly and whole-heartedly. Don't be crooked, delude others and cheat yourself, but follow faithfully the entreaty of your own heart. All's well if you bear in mind but this. And you can't discover the true need of your heart at once. You'll make various illusions for yourself. But if you're only in earnest, the wisdom to discover it will gradually be polished out.

Yuien. I can't understand what you say very well. But I intend to live earnestly.

Shinran. That's right. You have a good nature, obedient and straightforward. I love you. You must take care of that nature. Go straight on to your destiny. There's nothing but life to polish out

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wisdom. Now you seem young for your age, but later you'll grow up.

Yuien. I was scolded by Chiō Dono a little while ago.

Shinran. What did he say?

Yuien. He said my loneliness was due to insufficient faith. One who believes in the salvation of Buddha must have an ecstatic feeling. That ecstasy is the proof of salvation. If your heart's filled with exultation, you can't feel lonely. He said my loneliness was proof that I wasn't saved.

Shinran. H'm. (*Considers.*)

(Both are silent for a little. The sound of a bell and voices chanting a sutra in the main hall are faintly audible.)

Yuien. Master, er—(*Blushes.*) What's love like?

Shinran (*seriously*). It's a painful thing.

Yuien. Is love a sin?

Shinran. Love twines together with sin. We can't love in this world without sin.

Yuien. Then we mustn't love, must we?

Shinran. All the same, every one loves once in his life. Love's like a barrier which stands in the path of human life. When one passes this barrier, a new scene spreads out before his eyes. It may be said that many men's lives are determined by the way they pass this barrier.

Yuien. Is it so important as all that?

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Shinran. It's the uniquely important factor in life. If a man approaches this barrier seriously, he'll understand life. He'll understand love. His wisdom will blossom forth all at once. His soul will begin to be able to see into the essence of things. If he approaches this barrier with an immoral and frivolous heart, he'll become blind and slovenly. He'll lose the power to yearn for the refreshing land on the other side, and his energies failing on this side, he'll fall down exhausted.

Yuien. Then do love and faith go hand in hand?

Shinran. Love is a road leading to faith. If men are earnest in their pure and honest desires, they'll all enter into religious consciousness. When a man loves, his heart's wondrously purified. He understands the grief of human life. He touches terrestrial fate. Then faith's not far off.

Yuien. Then is it all right for me to love? \

Shinran (smiling). Your way of asking is naïve. I won't say whether it's good or bad. If you love, you may love. Only love seriously and straightforwardly.

Yuien. Have you ever loved?

Shinran. Yes. (*Pauses.*) It was when I was practising religious austerities with all my might on Mt. Hiei. I went down to the imperial palace as a substitute for the priest Jichin and was asked to compose an ode in the presence of the Emperor.

The subject given was, "Love." The Emperor was pleased with my effort and said it was better than any produced by the noble court poets. And I received a reward. Embarrassed, I was about to leave. Whereupon one of the noblemen said to me that to compose such a poem I must have loved. Its sentiment was one that could be understood only by one who had loved. "How about it?" he asked. "You've been in love, haven't you?"

Yuien. What did you answer?

Shinran. I replied that I had not. Then he said there was no use telling such lies. It was shameful for a priest to love. I heard the other nobles chuckle.

Yuien. Was he joking?

Shinran. He was poking fun at me and making me a laughing stock. I left the palace, my dignity hurt. How ashamed I felt! Then on my way back up Mt. Hiei, I couldn't but think earnestly. Was I really unacquainted with love? I couldn't say that. Then why couldn't I say that I had loved? Why had I lied? Because it was held that priests shouldn't love. I felt disgusted. I despised the falseness of our lives as if made aware of it for the first time. And the fact that our mountain-top penances had become mere form gave me an unbearable sense of hypocrisy. From that time I began to feel that I wanted to go down off the mountain. Was there not some way to live without lying so much? I couldn't

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but wonder if there wasn't some way to love and yet be saved.

Yuien. On the whole, of all sins, there's none so bad as hypocrisy, is there? Once you said that the hypocrite is farther from the Buddha than the murderer, didn't you?

Shinran. Yes, just that. Farther from the grace of Buddha than the evil doer of a hundred wrongs who feels his guilt is the hypocrite who piles up petty deeds of charity and doesn't recognize his own sin. Buddha saves us knowing that we are bad. For his salvation is for sinners.

Yuien. How different is the teaching of the sages that only the good are saved!

Shinran. It may be so with others. But there's no prospect of a man like me being saved through his own goodness. I still can't forget how I met with a lone woman once on my way back up the mountain when out on a night visit to the Rokkakudō. It was a night when the moon was shining like frozen ice in the cold sky. She asked me to take her up the mountain with me. I refused, saying that I couldn't, as Mt. Hiei was closed to women. Then she clung to the sleeve of my garment and cried. She implored me with all her strength, saying that I must take her up and make a nun of her, as she, too, wished to save herself through religious practices. No matter what I said, she wouldn't listen. At last she

asked in resentment if it was all the same whether women were saved or not. I was truly troubled. On the mountain it was held that woman, deep in sin, had been cast off by all the gods of the three worlds. Since I could do no other, I told her this in so many words and urged her to be resigned to her lot. Then, as I watched, she turned deathly pale. Finally, striking her breast, she pronounced upon the Buddha one curse after another. Then, like a flash, she ran away.

Yuien. My, you did a pitiful thing, didn't you?

Shinran. But I couldn't take her up the mountain. The forests were crying fiercely in the mountain wind. Deeply affected by the woman's curses, I went as in a trance back up to the summit. That night I couldn't sleep a wink. After that I couldn't but feel in my heart that it was a lie that woman couldn't be saved. I went every night to the Rokkakudō and prayed to Kannon Sama. I prayed in a transport of tears. I was willing to die. From that time I began to look at things in a very different way. I came to hate extremely the life on the mountain top. On my way back from the Rokkakudō, I used often to lean against the rail of the Sanjō Bridge and gaze at the people passing. Warriors with frowning faces, merchants head over heels in their mental calculations, and old people with girls went by. Or young men who were probably making for the gay quarters went

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by whistling. How lovingly I looked upon those people! I felt that they must all be forgiven. I felt that the world should be preserved as it is. I cried in my heart, "As it is, as it is." I asked myself, "Aren't they all saved?" Though I went back up the mountain, I always felt that it was no longer my home.

Yuien. That was when you met Hōnen Shōnin, wasn't it?

Shinran. Surely through the kind intervention of Kannon Sama. I could do nothing but cry before Hōnen Sama.

Yuien (tearfully). I understand well how you felt.
(They fall into silence for a moment. Enter First Priest and Third Priest.)

First Priest. Master, are you here?

Shinran. I've been talking with Yuien in the sunshine.

Thirst Priest. How do you feel?

Shinran. Practically all right. Thanks.

First Priest. I'm glad. Please take care of yourself.

Shinran. Come talk with us here. How are things in the main hall?

(YUIEN brings cushions, puts them down for the two Priests to sit on and pours out tea.)

Third Priest. It's packed with worshipers. The prayer service is over and Chiō Dono is now in the midst of his sermon.

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First Priest. They all seem to be moved by his earnest preaching.

Third Priest. It's an authoritative and strong sermon. They're all listening with the deepest respect.

First Priest. To-day's sermon's especially fine.

Shinran. The text is religious ecstasy again, isn't it?

Third Priest. Do you know?

Shinran. Chiō once talked to me, and I heard a little from Yuien a moment ago.

First Priest. He's telling enthusiastically how much more precious is religious joy than such earthly pleasures as wealth and fame.

Third Priest. He even says it's more pleasant than love.

Yuien. He says that with it there's no fear of death, no sadness in solitude, and no worldly temptation.

First Priest. He says ecstasy is the proof of salvation.

Third Priest. As I listened to him talk I felt anew the specially blessed position of us priests.

Yuien. When I hear those things, I feel uneasy. I'm always lonely lately. I'm listless and at times my heart won't dance even when I read the sutras. I'm weak of body, and last month when my fever got a little high, I was terribly afraid I might die. I

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don't want to die now at all. I somehow feel a yearning and an unwillingness to give up the bright world. I can produce no such strong proof as Chiō Sama can. If ecstasy in the law is the proof of salvation, is it that I'm not saved? I can't doubt the one fact that, even as I am, Buddha will save me, but—

First Priest. I think it's because your body's weak.

Third Priest. After all, isn't it because your faith's young?

Yuien. Master, what on earth can be the matter? Please tell me. I'm unbearably distressed. Am I saved? Am I lost?

Shinran. You're saved. There's nothing to worry about. In truth, I too, live on with the same feelings as Yuien. When I'm sick, I fear death, and when caught in the relentless clutches of worldly passions, I'm sometimes so lonely I can hardly stand it. I'm prone in spite of all to neglect this dancing joy. Sometimes I fall into fervently ecstatic meditation, but it's easy for that white heat soon to scatter like ashes. I'm always troubled.

First Priest (looking at SHINRAN in surprise). You, did you say?

Shinran. I'm always blaming myself and asking myself why I should be like that. My karma is very, very deep. Since I'm like this in my old age, it's

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not unnatural that young Yuien should be troubled. But I don't doubt of salvation at all. Buddha, knowing beforehand, styled us common men dressed in worldly passions. He saves us helpless sinners as we are.

Third Priest. Then is Chiō Dono's idea mistaken?

Shinran. No, it's not mistaken. Men's karmas are deep or shallow according to the individual. Blessed are they who fall heir to ecstasy. All joy be theirs. In some there's little worldly passion, in some worldly passion is strong, and they suffer. Only it's shallow to call ecstasy the proof of salvation. I mean to tell Chiō, too, but please heed well what I say. There's no one proof of salvation. To seek such a proof is to rely on our own discretion and is one sort of self-dependence. Salvation is accomplished through the vow of Buddha. It's well for us not to depend on our own contrivances, but simply to have faith. He whose karma is shallow and he whose karma is deep must pass through this world in entirely different ways. But they're both saved.

Yuien. I feel thankful. It's beyond my deserts.

First Priest. I hadn't thought of that. Whether we experience religious ecstasy or not, and without relation to the changes in our hearts, our salvation is established, isn't it?

Shinran. Otherwise it couldn't be called genuine

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salvation indestructible by fate. For the condition of our hearts is controlled by fate.

Third Priest. After all, the original nature of self-reliance by which we would save ourselves by our own merit is left in us, isn't it? It's not easy to restore all things to Buddha.

Shinran. Would that I could grow simple-hearted and trust everything to him.

Yuicn. The more I hear, the deeper this teaching becomes.

Shinran. All are saved. Only they don't know it.
(*Enter Second Priest.*)

Second Priest. Are you all here? I've finally finished my sermon. (*He is excited.*)

Shinran. You've worked hard. Please come rest here a while.

Second Priest. I have a favor to ask of you, master. Just now when I got done preaching, a little party of pilgrims came up to the pulpit and begged me to introduce them to you, as they're most eager to meet you.

Shinran. Have they some particular business with me?

Second Priest. They say they've come all the way from a great distance to ask you about the important question of rebirth. Their faces are full of eagerness.

Shinran. If it's the matter of rebirth, they should have heard about it many times ere this. It's truly

a simple thing, and I have nothing to add on the subject.

Second Priest. So I told them. Especially since you're a little ill, I asked them if they couldn't put off the day. But they all but cried and said that since they'd all come a long way, I must get you to see them. Because they were so earnest, I sympathized with them, and though I hate to trouble you in your illness, I beg that you'll receive them.

Shinran. That's a simple matter. If anybody wants to see me, I'll see him at any time. Only please tell them this one thing, that I don't know anything difficult. Then please bring them here at once.

Second Priest. Thank you. They'll surely all be glad. (*Goes out.*)

First Priest. They seem to have come a long way, don't they?

Third Priest. They're an earnest band of pilgrims, aren't they?

Yuien. They've come all the way up to Kyōto in their desire to see the superior. I think it's admirable.

(*SHINRAN sits in silent meditation. Enter Second Priest conducting six Pilgrims.*)

Shinran (seeing the Pilgrims hesitate). Just come right over here. Don't stand on ceremony.

(*YUIEN places cushions for them, and the Pilgrims sit down.*)

Shinran. I'm Shinran. (*Indicating the disciples.*)
These are my people who are always with me.

First Pilgrim. Are you Shinran Sama? (*Looks intently at SHINRAN with tearful eyes.*)

Second Pilgrim. I'm rejoiced. I've prayed that I might see you once in my life.

Third Pilgrim. I wept when we passed the Ōsaka barrier and they told me this was Kyōto.

Fourth Pilgrim. Truly this has been no easy quest.

Fifth Pilgrim. Nothing could please me more than this fulfillment of a long-cherished desire.

Sixth Pilgrim. I was beside myself with fear lest we might be refused a while ago in the main hall.

Shinran (moved). It's very kind of you to come. I, too, am happy. Where have you come from?

First Pilgrim. We're from the province of Hitachi.

Fourth Pilgrim. We're from Echigo.

Shinran. My, have you come so far as that?

Second Pilgrim. We've made a very long trip.

Shinran. You surely have. I have deep memories of Hitachi and Echigo.

Fourth Pilgrim. In my province, fellow religionists meet together everywhere and talk about you.

First Pilgrim. The influence you left behind you reaches into every corner of my province.

Third Pilgrim. How I love you whom I've never seen before!

Shinran. I'm drawn to you, too. I'm reminded

of the days when I was journeying about in those regions.

Fifth Pilgrim. Many things have changed since then.

Shinran. Anyway it was twenty years ago.

Sixth Pilgrim. Only the snow goes on heaping up deep as usual.

Shinran. I'll never in my life forget the sight of the Echigo range covered with snow.

Fourth Pilgrim. Don't you feel that you'd like to come back once more?

Shinran. If destiny permits. But probably I'll never go again. I've grown old, you see.

First Pilgrim. How old are you?

Shinran. Seventy-five.

Second Pilgrim. A while ago I was told that you're not well.

Shinran. No, I've caught a light cold. I'm practically all right now.

Second Pilgrim. Please take good care of yourself.

Third Pilgrim. For how everybody depends on you!

Shinran. You're very kind. (*Pauses and points to YUIEN.*) He comes from Hitachi.

Yuien. I was born in Hitachi near the village of Daimon.

First Pilgrim. When I hear that you're from my province, my heart goes out to you. Have you been a long time in Kyōto?

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Yuien. It's ten years since I left the old province. My father's still there, and I love the place.

Shinran. Fifteen years ago, when traveling in Hitachi, I was snowed in and was given a night's lodging at his house. That was the destiny that led to our living together day and night as we do now.

Second Pilgrim. Destiny's a mysterious thing, isn't it?

First Priest. They say even the touching of sleeves is a karma relation from a previous life.

Second Priest. We couldn't all be talking together intimately like this for half a day but for destiny.

Third Priest. Even a single meeting, or a single parting, is by no means brought about by the will to bring it about. In the world of men sadness and gladness are deep arrangements fixed in former lives.

Yuien. When I think of destiny, I feel like crying. I believe this world's born enemies who are busy bruising each other, should they turn their thoughts to their karma relations, would gladly forgive each other. Wouldn't they grasp each other's hands and, weeping, cry, "Ah, what an evil destiny is ours!"

Shinran. Even a married couple that's incompatible can't separate all their lives if fate so decrees. When they've gone to their graves, they'll probably know all. And they'll be glad together because they've never parted, but lived as man and wife all their lives.

Yuien. Then they'll think, "It was well we loved. It was well we forgave. We're fortunate not to have cursed then."

Third Priest. All men should live amicably together : that's it, isn't it?

(They fall into a deep silence.)

First Pilgrim (coming forward). In truth we've crossed more than ten provinces and come all the way to Kyōto because we're troubled by the single matter of rebirth. We beseech help on the great problem of the life next to follow this. On behalf of all these others, I pray that you will help us. Please teach us the way of rebirth.

Shinran. It's truly admirable of you to seek the way so earnestly. I always feel unhappy that the men of this world think faith a thing of no account. Faith is the most important of all things. It's the real test. It's the place where the roads to Hell and Paradise fork. It's the thing that men must face most seriously of all. Then, have you not been taught at your temples at home?

Second Pilgrim. We're always being taught.

Shinran. What are you taught?

Third Pilgrim. This, that if we pray with all our might to Amida Sama, saying "Please save us in this life to come," he will surely save us, though we be the worst of sinners.

Shinran. That's true. That's all you need to do.

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Fourth Pilgrim. We've heard this often and know it well. We beg you to teach us in detail what comes next.

Shinran. What'll you do with it when you've heard?

Fifth Pilgrim. We want to go to Paradise.

Shinran. Verily you can go to Paradise by repeating the prayer to Amida which you've heard in your own provinces and know so well.

Sixth Pilgrim. But somehow we feel uneasy.

Shinran. Set your hearts at ease. That alone's enough.

First Pilgrim. May I ask what gives you comfort.

Shinran. I, too, depend on Amida's prayer alone.

Second Pilgrim. But it's too simple.

Shinran. That simplicity is the characteristic of this sect. Without simplicity, there's no truth. And again, the heart of the masses could not be touched without it.

Third Pilgrim. That may be so, but you studied for many years on Mt. Hiei and at Nara. We unlettered men may not be able to understand, but please share with us a part of the education you got there.

Fourth Pilgrim. We've come all this distance to receive it.

Fifth Pilgrim. We'll take it home to our provinces as the souvenir of this trip.

Shinran (looking serious). No, that varied learning is in truth a hindrance on the journey to Paradise and cannot help. Faith and learning are different things. Though you examined the whole storehouse of the eight myriad sutras, they'd have no power to open the gates of Paradise. The prayer to Amida is the only established way. If, in the envious thought that I understand difficult interpretations of the sutras or that I ought to know further details about the ways of rebirth, you've come all this way to ask, I'm truly sorry. I know nothing difficult, you see. If that's what you want, there are grave scholars on Mt. Hiei and in Nara. Please go there and ask.

First Pilgrim. Your modest words touch me. I admire you more and more.

Second Pilgrim. What lack can there be in you who are known as the greatest genius of Mt. Hiei?

Shinran. I was not able to find the road of deliverance through the learning heaped up on Mt. Hiei. I threw away learning. And having accepted the assurance of a good teacher that one can be saved by the repetition of Amida's prayer, there's nothing to it but faith.

Third Pilgrim. Are you serious?

(They all look doubtful.)

Shinran. Why should I deceive? Don't think that I'm playing with your feelings. Most truth is simple. As a process of salvation, nothing could

look so simple from without as the prayer to Amida. Only six ideographs, you see. But if you go into the mood of it from within, it's infinitely and profoundly complicated. Probably you can never reach the bottom of it in your whole lives. It's the love, fate and sorrow of human existence, the substance of all the experience that could come into your whole lives, boiled down and packed into one simple formula. Along the road of human life, every time you look back, you can see the depth of these six characters. (*Grows more and more earnest.*) That's the increase of wisdom. It's a different thing from the study of the sacred books. For though your knowledge increase, the eyes of your soul see no more clearly. If you should consult me, I would say that the prayer you know so well is sufficient. It's absurd to take pride in the hearing of expositions of the holy texts. It's better that each of you should take care to cultivate a taste for the feeling of the Amida prayer. Love men. Forgive. Bear grief. Strive painfully to fulfil your fate. Look squarely at your destiny. Then the eyes with which you look upon the varied phenomena of human life will become moist. The compassion of Buddha will sink gratefully into your hearts. "Namu Amida Butsu" fits the heart exactly. This is true learning.

Fifth Pilgrim. We've been in the wrong. Even we stupid men have understood you well. To go to

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Paradise, it's enough simply to repeat the prayer to Amida, isn't it? That's all that's necessary, isn't it?

Sixth Pilgrim. Like the cutting of a sharp knife, my heart sees distinctly.

First Pilgrim. Only please tell me one thing. Is there any proof that by repeating that prayer we can be born into the Pure Land?

Shinran. There's no proof to faith. If you seek proof, you don't believe. (*In one earnest breath.*) If Amida's great desire to save the world was true, Shaka Son's teaching was not false. If Shaka Son's teaching was not false, Zendō's interpretation was not deception. If Zendō's interpretation was not deception, Hōnen Shōnin's teaching surely was not empty. (*Pauses.*) Nay, though having been made proud by Hōnen Shōnin, I be about to fall into Hell, I'll feel no resentment. But for Amida's vow, there could be no possible end for me but Hell. I'm an utterly irredeemable sinner. That's true. If I express my heart clearly, I must admit that I don't know at all whether the prayer to Amida can truly be the seed to birth in Paradise or is the reason for falling into Hell. I leave everything to Buddha. I entrust my hope, my life, myself to him. I wonder where he'll lead me.

(*All fall silent for a moment.*)

First Pilgrim. I feel ashamed. How vile I am

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in the shallowness of my heart to say that without proof I can't believe!

Second Pilgrim. The self-dependence of my heart has been exposed as if bleached out in the sun.

Third Pilgrim. I realize that I've built all sorts of walls and shut out the mercy of Buddha.

Fourth Pilgrim. I still hadn't surrendered all by any means.

Fifth Pilgrim. I feel as if that in my heart which spoils and flatters me is broken down.

Sixth Pilgrim (tearfully). When I think of it, it's the vow of the reliable Buddha.

Shinran. I'm afraid I've spoken impertinently. Please, please, don't try to learn difficult things. Lean on Buddha with the simple hearts of children. Our talk has grown too serious. Let's just chat a little. Have you been to see the famous places?

First Pilgrim. We haven't seen anything yet.

Second Pilgrim. We came here the minute we reached Kyōto.

Shinran. Gion, Kiyomizu, Chionin. And the maples must be beginning to redden at Arashiyama. If you'd like, I'll send somebody to guide you.

First Pilgrim. We would, thanks.

(The evening bell sounds.)

Yuien. Master, the day's dying, and the air's chill. Please come rest in your room, or it'll be bad for your health.

Fourth Pilgrim. Please rest.

Fifth Pilgrim. We'll take our leave.

Shinran. No, please stay at my temple to-night. Now let's brew some tea in my room and have a leisurely talk. (*To the disciples.*) You please come with us, too. Yuien, lead the way.

(SHINRAN *gets up first and goes out. They all stand up.*)

Yuien. Come, just walk this way.

(*Curtain.*)

ACT III—SCENE I

PERSONS IN THE SCENE

ZENRAN, son to Shinran, aged 32.

YUIEN.

ASAKA, a harlot, aged 26.

KAEDE, a harlot, aged 16.

Three Harlots.

Two Waitresses.

A Tea-house Clown.

(Kiya Machi in Sanjō. A room at the tea-house called the Matsunoya. It looks out on the Kamo River. It is toward evening on an autumn day. The three Harlots are leaning on the parapet talking.)

First Harlot. How good it feels in this cool wind !

Second Harlot. My face burns frightfully. *(Puts her hand to her cheek.)*

Third Harlot. I'm all played out with the reveling.

First Harlot. Yes, for the last four or five days it's been nothing but drink, drink, drink, and sing, sing, sing.

Second Harlot. I've been drunk down by Zenran Sama and have run away worn out with drinking.

Third Harlot. Zenran Sama can down any amount pellmell. You can't possibly keep up with him. Still, he doesn't seem to like it.

First Harlot. The more he drinks, the paler he gets.

Second Harlot. He's a queer fish who, just as you're thinking he's absurdly hilarious, suddenly bursts into tears. I hate a man who cries when he's full of *saké*.

Third Harlot. Really sometimes I'm disgusted. Recently when I was drinking with him, he was strangely depressed, and looking into my face intently, he said, "I love you, I love you," and threw his arms around me. And it wasn't lust.

First Harlot. When you're wondering if he isn't crazy, you find that there's a strong side to him, too.

Second Harlot. At first I wondered if he was all there. But, on the contrary, he's so steady he's almost too sharp. We can't talk recklessly.

Third Harlot. Anyway he doesn't know how to win a woman, does he?

First Harlot. If you say that, Asaka San'll be angry.

Second Harlot. Speaking of Asaka San, she has an awful crush on him. I wonder why a gentle girl like Asaka San likes such a man.

Third Harlot. There's no accounting for tastes.

As for you, you probably fancy the handsome young priest who came to see Zenran Sama the other day.

Second Harlot. You're always joking. (*Pretends to strike at her.*) He's Kaede San's.

(*Singing and talking voices are heard, and the sound of people walking.*)

First Harlot. They seem to be coming here.

(*Enter ZENRAN, followed by ASAKA, KAEDE, the Clown and a Waitress.*)

Clown. Mercy me! Has everybody come here to hide?

Zenran. Have you been planning something secretly here to fool us? (*Laughs.*)

Clown. For our sakes, please stop your secret talk.

First Harlot (to ZENRAN). It's you who are enjoying yourself.

Second Harlot. Finding our presence a nuisance, we took the hint.

Zenran. I'm sorry.

Clown. Sorry as Tōsaibōzu.

Zenran. "Bōzu" is a bit rough. (*Laughs.*)

Clown. A thousand pardons. (*Beats his own head with his fan. All laugh.*)

Zenran. As punishment for running away without a word, I'll make you drink more *saké*. Here, bring *saké*.

Waitress. At your service. (*Starts to go.*)

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Asaka. Please don't drink any more. It's not good for you. Haven't you done nothing but drink since last night?

Zenran. Do you ask me to take care of my health? You're a good wife, aren't you? (*Laughs loudly.*) Let's have another drink here looking at the river view. That melancholy talk of yours just now depressed me. (*To the Waitress.*) Bring it quickly.

(*The Waitress goes out.*)

Asaka. Really you ought to quit. Since you don't like it so well as to require it.

Zenran. I'll drink and drink till I burn my body up. I live by lighting the fire in my body. When it goes out, I'm so lonely I can't stand it.

Asaka. But there's a limit.

Zenran. There's no limit to my loneliness. I'm lonely to the bottom of my soul.

Asaka. Aren't we here to dispell that loneliness for you?

Zenran. Yes. I couldn't get along without you. I couldn't live without you. All the same, when I'm playing with you, I get more lonely than ever. Asaka, you always wear a lonely face. To-day, brace up and be more lively.

Asaka. But it's my nature, so it can't be helped.

Zenran. To-day we'll all let loose. We'll forget everything. Though we're lonely, we'll force our-

selves to think we're happy. Against all reason, we'll make it true that man's life's good and harmonious. (*Raises his voice.*) Come, now this world's a harmony. Men depend beautifully on each other. The root of the evil in men's hearts is severed. There's not a single soul unhappy. All rejoice. They all play like children. Ah, the river flows, the river flows. Gently and peacefully. (*Fastens his eyes on the river.*)

(*Enter the Waitress with saké, food, and the utensils needed for a drinking bout.*)

Zenran. Come, all drink, drink. (*Offers cups to the Harlots.*)

First Harlot. Please excuse me.

Second Harlot. I've stood all I can.

Zenran. No, you must drink, spite of everything.

Clown. For my lord's commands may not be denied.

(*The Waitress goes about pouring out saké for the Harlots.*)

Zenran (*raising his cup*). How rich and strong is this brimming and overflowing liquid of gold! It's as if the spirit of joy's been melted and made to flow. I feel as if the sensations of man's mean and defective world have utterly disappeared. (*Drains the cup.*) To whom shall I give this cup? (*Looks about the room.*) Kaede, Kaede. To little Kaede. (*Presents the cup to KAEDA.*)

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Kaede. Many thanks. (*Bows her head slightly and takes the cup.*)

(*The Waitress pours out saké. KAEDE barely touches it to her lips and puts it down.*)

Zenran. Kaede, sing something for us.

Kaede. I don't want to. Aren't there a lot of my elder sisters here?

Zenran. No, I want you.

Clown. Come, we want you, we want you.

Kaede. There's no getting out of it. (*She sings in a childish voice. ASAKA plays the samisen.*)

Your precious letter I conceal
In bluebells and lespedeza;
The moon is o'er the meadow,
And the dew is on the grass;
For you, my love, I *pine*
Insects chirrup nightly here;
Through the sky of deep'ning night,
Comes the cry of flying geese.
Love like this—

Zenran. That's enough. That's enough. (*As if finding it unbearable.*) Ah, how small that mouth!

Asaka (*still holding the samisen*). My, how you stopped it all at once right in the middle!

Zenran. Look. This little child. Making her sing songs for strange rioters—(*Tearfully.*) Drink another. (*Gives a cup to KAEDE.*)

Kaede. I've had enough.

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Clown (in falsetto). I'll help you. (*Picks up the cup from before KAEDE and drinks.*)

Asaka. What's the matter with you to-day ?

Zenran. Nothing at all.

Asaka. Let's quit for to-day. Your color's bad. I don't feel a bit like making merry.

Zenran. You're a lonely-spoken girl, aren't you ? (*Looks attentively into ASAKA's face. Then suddenly sticks his fingers into her front hair.*)

Asaka (in surprise). Here, what are you doing ? (*Puts her hands to her head.*)

(ZENRAN says nothing.)

Kaede. Your side hair's come down.

Zenran. When I look at your woolly black hair, I don't like it. (*To the Clown.*) Here, let's hear you mimic a cock.

Clown. All right, sir. (*Cries like a cock. The Harlots laugh.*)

Zenran. Let's see you walk on your knees.

Clown. Like this, sir ? (*Walks on his knees. The Harlots laugh.*)

Zenran. Let's see you pound your head.

Clown. With pleasure. (*Beats his head with his fan.*)

Zenran (madly). More, more.

(*The Clown rains blow after blow on his own head in rapid succession.*)

Zenran. Oh ! (*Shuts his eyes.*)

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Second Harlot. You're frightfully down in the blues, aren't you?

Asaka (looking at ZENRAN fondly). Zenran Sama. I understand. Your heart's troubled over the messenger you sent to the temple.

(A slight chill falls on the party. ZENRAN sits buried in thought.)

First Harlot. What are you thinking about?

Second Harlot. You're awfully depressed, aren't you?

Zenran (suddenly lively). I was just thinking of redeeming you.

Second Harlot (laughing). Thanks very much. Then what'll you do?

Zenran. Dear me, that's plain. I'll take you home and make you my wife. Come, come here. *(Rises and, taking the Second Harlot's hand, pulls her to her feet.)*

Second Harlot. Quit fooling.

Zenran. Come, come here. *(Drags her forcibly.)*

Second Harlot (as she is dragged along totteringlly). Don't play tricks. *(Shakes him off and starts back for her seat.)*

Zenran. You dear. *(Takes her in his arms from behind.)*

Second Harlot. Here, let me go, please. Let me go, please. *(Squirms.)* When you do that, it hurts, it hurts unbearably.

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Zenran (laughing). What an irresponsible individual she is! This girl.

(All look on in surprise. Enter a Waitress.)

Waitress. Yuien Sama has just come.

Zenran (releases the Harlot. He is a little shaky.)
Bring him here. *(Returns to his seat.)*

(All are silent. Enter YUIEN. He is dressed in his priest's robe.)

Yuien. Excuse me. *(Struck by the appearance of the party, he hesitates a little.)*

Zenran. I'm glad to see you. I was waiting. Just come over here. There's nobody here to be afraid of. It's a remarkable show, isn't it? *(Laughs loudly.)*

Waitress. Please come in.

Yuien (going in and kneeling down before ZENRAN).
I'm indebted to you for the other day.

Zenran. It was rude of me to send a messenger to-day. Didn't it give you trouble? \ ,

Yuien. No. When I heard a messenger had come from you, I came gladly. Is there something I can do for you?

Zenran. No. There isn't anything I want done. Only I was lonely and wanted to see you and talk with you.

Yuien. And I wanted to see you.

Waitress (bringing a new cup and placing it before YUIEN). Please take this.

Yuien (hesitating). I don't drink.

Waitress. But just one.

Zenran. No, don't urge it on him. (*Seeing YUIEN'S discomfort.*) Since we have something to talk over, you all go out and leave us alone.

Waitress. I understand, sir. Then, all come.

(*They go out and leave the two alone.*)

Zenran. I'm ashamed to have called you to such a place as this. And what's worse, I'm drunk.

Yuien. I don't care. I was glad to come.

Zenran. I've been lonely. There's nobody who can understand my heart. Even when I'm drinking *saké* like this, I'm cool in the bottom of my heart. I'm suffering. Ever since meeting you recently, I've felt loving and warm toward you. I feel that you easily take in the thoughts in my breast. When I'm with you, I feel like making you listen to all sorts of things.

Yuien. And I, after leaving you the other day, could think of nothing but you. I'm always thinking I'd like to see you. How glad I was when the messenger came from you!

Zenran. Only once in my life long ago was I ever drawn to a man like this. I've lived a long while with a desolate heart. (*Pauses.*) I love you.

Yuien. I'm glad. Why do men speak ill of such a man as you? I can't understand that. The other day at the temple, I got angry because they were all

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saying bad things about you. And I said, "He's a good man and not the sort you think him."

Zenran. What sort of bad things did they say about me?

Yuien. They said you were a child of destruction who was not only dissipated but didn't believe in the salvation of the Jōdo sect. They said you were of a violent disposition, unlike your father's.

Zenran. That's not unreasonable. They're right. Very likely, I'm a soul doomed to destruction. My disposition's utterly violent. I fit all their criticisms.

Yuien. My, with a gentle nature like yours—

Zenran. No. (*Cuts him off.*) When with you, only the good in my nature's aroused. But with others, it's altogether different, and my violent nature comes out.

Yuien. I think they're all wrong. You're a good man yourself, surely. That's what I believe.

Zenran (tearfully). Nobody else talks to me like that. I can't do as I like with my disposition. And my situation ever since I was a little tike and the flaws in the heart I received may be to blame. As you know, I've been disowned by my father for a long time. (*YUIEN listens in silence.*) I gave my father all sorts of trouble, you see. He must hate me even now, doesn't he?

Yuien. No. You're wrong. You don't know how much the superior worries over you in secret.

Zenran. How does he live?

Yuien. From morning till night, he's absorbed in repeating the prayer to Amida. Recently he took a cold and's been resting, but he's nearly well. But he's grown quite old.

Zenran. He must have. Since I'm always in Inada and seldom come to Kyōto, and especially since I'm in no position to see him, I know nothing of his circumstances. I'm unfilial, but I've not forgot my father. Please take care of him.

Yuien. I'm always with him as his personal attendant.

Zenran. Does he love you?

Yuien. Far beyond my deserts. Of all his many disciples, he loves me best.

Zenran. Everybody must love you. That Kaede says she loves you. (*Smiles.*)

Yuien (blushing). You're joking.

Zenran. How do you feel toward women? I pity them and can't help loving them. Especially when I'm with the women in such a place as this, I feel that I'm associating with the cream of humanity. The world's people decorate their outsides with form and etiquette and don't show the least bit of their real hearts. They make such things their armor and protect themselves with them, you see. I want to associate with people who aren't so cautious. I want to mingle without hiding my ugliness and

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weakness. In such a place as this, you see, people share the burden of their shame. You don't know what warm and honest intercourse it is. And I can't help being attracted by the mood inspired by women. It's sadder than the dews of autumn.

Yuien. Away back in my heart, I feel a desire for woman. But as yet I know nothing about what sort of thing she is. Nor do I know what procedure is good if one would have to do with her.

Zenran (looking at YUIEN lovingly). You're truly pure. I've soiled myself through and through, but I respect a pure man. For he's utterly different. But it's not likely you'll be able to get through this life without being tormented by woman. As for me, ever since I've known anything, the consciousness of woman has never been out of my head. But I'm not tempting you. *(He laughs.)*

Yuien (seriously). Recently I talked of such things with the superior.

Zenran. What did father say ?

Yuien. It's all right to love, but he said to love seriously and earnestly.

Zenran. H'm.

Yuien. I've been wanting to ask you why you were disowned ?

Zenran (looking gloomy). I loved unlawfully. No, I don't know even now whether it was lawful or unlawful. I loved another man's wife.

Yuien. Oh!

Zenran. The girl loved me before she was married. The justice of this world took her from me. But it couldn't take the love out of my heart. What happened afterwards was the natural result of the contradictory state of affairs. Her husband was a relative of mine. That complicated the tragedy. For love, I broke the law and became a wicked man. (*Railingly.*) Whether love breaks the law, or the law breaks love, I don't know even yet.

Yuien. What became of the woman?

Zenran. She was sent home, and fell ill in consequence. They wouldn't let me see her. She finally died. Even at her death, I didn't see her.

Yuien. What became of her husband?

Zenran. He wept and was angry. He still curses both our names. I can't bear to think of him. I loved him. He was gentle. He was good. I don't know whom I ought to blame for it. That I did wrong, there's no denying. But is that all? I rather want to put the blame on the disharmony of human life. If there's a Buddha who made the world, I want to put it on him.

Yuien. Oh, Zenran Sama! That's terrible. I love you. I weep for you. Please don't repeat that last again.

Zenran. I don't know anything. I can't believe anything. I harbor doubts as to the foundations on

which the world is built. What an absurd world it is! What a discord human life is! After that, I lost the blessing out of my heart. I came to take a biased view of things. I got so I couldn't believe anything. In the midst of anguish, indignation and worry, woman alone appears to my eyes like a red flower. Claspng her body, I've found a way to forget my anguish. Men call me a profligate. I accept the name.

Yuien. I don't know what to say. I grieve over your unhappy fate. You must truly feel as if you can't bear it. But I've heard that Buddha will pardon a man just as he is in his sin, no matter how great his crimes. The superior is always teaching me that for the sake of man who is so made that he must sin, Buddha achieves redemption.

Zenran. I congratulate you on your pure and readily believing heart. But I can't easily believe in that. Perhaps my heart's grown cynical. Maybe I've seen too much fraud. It's too conveniently fashioned a salvation. It's the sort of peace of mind the smooth heart of a selfish scoundrel would invent. Before you, I'm ashamed of my perverted way of thinking. But the Jōdo faith looks like a salvation for the evil; though, in truth, unless one's a good man with a pure heart, it, too, is a hard teaching to accept. Also, I think it incontestable. I think my inability to believe is the punishment for my sin and

dissipation. You and my father are both good and pure, you see. Though you think yourselves great sinners. If a man soils his soul too much, he reaches a point where he can't accept things as they are. I'm frightfully soiled, you see. You simply can't imagine. For instance—(*Mumbles as if in anguish.*) No, you see, I do things that I can't possibly mention in your presence. Really I do malicious, mean and unnatural things, you see. I'm positively no man to be forgiven unpunished. That would be too impertinent. Though I'm despicable, I haven't grown so brazen-faced that while I commit foul sins like this I can pray to be saved as I am. That shows a conscience at least. It's my pride. I'd rather be told, "Do such and such penances and I'll save you." I'm willing to undergo any hardships. If that's impossible, I'll take my punishment. That's my sincere desire.

Yuien. What you say hurts me. You suffer deep anguish unknown to me. A noble conscience beats in your words. Nay, I feel as if I've been listening to a noble sermon.

Zenran. No, I stand before you a devil. I'm saddled with a life of destruction. Please pity a soul cursed with the inability to believe.

Yuien. I believe you're a child of Buddha. As I listen to you, I can't get the slightest impression of a devil. Zenran Sama, listen to me. Though I haven't any wisdom to impart to you. I think you

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insult your own soul. I think you're perverse and consider things rebelliously. I sympathize infinitely with the course by which you've reached this stage. But I'm convinced that the way you're walking is not carrying you directly forward along the main road. According to what the superior constantly tells me, when we're in difficulties and can't see our own sins, we feel an unreasonable resentment. At such times we want to heap that resentment on Buddha. Resist that. It's not unnatural, but endure steadfastly. Never, never curse. He says that at such times faith is born of that endurance. When we come to our graves, don't you suppose we'll understand everything? When we come to know that Buddha's deep love is bound up in that unreasonableness, won't we be ashamed of having been angry with him? Isn't the wisdom of man vastly different from the wisdom of Buddha?

Zenran. Your words are simple but true. Though callow, they gleam with wisdom. I feel as if I'm being whipped. I feel deeply that I must try to think.

Yuien. I've been told that the worst sin is to kill the true desire of one's soul.

Zenran. Ah, I want to revive an honest and straightforward heart.

(They sit in silent thought.)

Yuien. Wouldn't you like to see your father?

Zenran. I would, but I can't.

Yuien. Shall I ask him?

Zenran. Thanks, but let it go. For he'll positively not see me.

Yuien. But in his heart, he wants to see you. Both father and son want to meet. Then it's a shame if they can't. What power prevents? I want to smash that power. I can't bear it.

Zenran. That power's the same that shattered my love. It's frightfully strong. I curse it. But I haven't the strength to smash it.

Yuien. It's the social will. It's the stubborn will of the countless men in the world. That power rules everything in my temple, too. Recently I bumped into it. Ah, why don't the men in this world know more affection. They probably don't realize that their hard hearts are afflicting others. It makes me miserable.

Zenran. It wouldn't do father any good either for me to see him now. Even though he should permit it. The justice of the world is painful. I've been in contact with that cruel power since infancy. The truth is, I'm not the child of my father's wife.

Yuien (surprised). I never heard that before.

Zenran. My mother was the daughter of a certain samurai of Inada. When father was in Echigo, his wife died. After pilgrimages all over the country, he came to Inada and, stopping in the house of my

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mother's father, lived in that town for fifteen years. Meanwhile they fell in love. That's how I was born. I passed dark days before I was allowed to call them father and mother. I don't blame father at all. That's the love of human life and the sadness of fate, I suppose.

Yuien. What became of your mother?

Zenran. When father went back to Kyōto, she was left in Inada, but she's dead now.

Yuien. Really life in this world is an infinitely melancholy thing, isn't it?

Zenran. To me this world looks like a valley of sadness.

(The two fall silent.)

Yuien. To-day I must be going.

Zenran. Must you? To-day I've been happy. Though I wish we could talk longer.

Yuien. And I wish I could stay on indefinitely, but I came away without letting the superior know.

Zenran. You're worried for my sake, aren't you? Forgive me. To-day you've made me think of many things. I'm thankful.

Yuien. I've never had such a satisfying talk before. I'll surely come again.

Zenran. Please come as often as you can. I'm always lonely.

Yuien. Then good-bye. *(Gets up, goes to the door)*

and, looking back, speaks earnestly.) If your father says he'll see you, what'll you do?

Zenran (thinks, then speaks positively). I'll go to him gladly.

Yuicu. Then sayōnara.

Zenran (seeing him off). Sayōnara. (*YUIEN goes out. ZENRAN stands motionless for a moment. Then he walks up and down in the room. Then, putting his back against a pillar, he falls into deep reverie. Enter ASAKA, with a silken lantern in her hand. Standing in the doorway, she looks at ZENRAN. Oblivious of her presence, he continues in absorption.*)

Asaka. Zenran Sama.

Zenran (looking at ASAKA). Asaka, what do you think? Here's a father and a son. The father's bathed in the grace of all heaven, and people look up to him as a saint. The son's drowned in drink and lust, and men despise him for a libertine. Father and son, separated by the world's justice, are yearning for each other.

Asaka. Oh, you surprise me—(*Listens attentively.*)

Zenran. They're starving for each other. But if they meet, the beautiful peace surrounding the father will be broken. Men will knit their brows in suspicion and disgust. Denunciation will gather about the father. Then what should the son do? Should he go to him or not?

Asaka (in a trembling voice). He'd better not go.

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Zenran. What if the father calls him? What if he says, "Wandering child, come back."

Asaka (painfully). He'd better not go.

Zenran. Oh. (*Staggers. Supports himself against the pillar.*)

Asaka. Zenran Sama! Zenran Sama! (*Runs and embraces ZENRAN.*)

Zenran. I don't know. It's too much for me. I—help me.

"*Asaka.* Don't go, but pray. Pray for your father's peace and happiness. I must be strong. If you call on me, on me whom you know to be weak, to help you. Long ago in that dangerous time when your fate for this life was settled, didn't you stand at the parting of the ways just as now? When it was your duty to protect the lifelong peace of the dear one you loved and your cousin, you were weak. You told me you injured both others and yourself. How often you've regretted and asked yourself why you didn't endure in your tears! It was only to-day. You told me your pitiful story for the first time. You wept on my knees. Your tears are hardly dry yet. You praised, then, my sacrifice for my poor father and mother. You said, "Bear your troubles for the sake of the happiness of others."

Zenran. You give me back my very words!

Asaka (weeping). I whip you. How strong my words are!

Zenran. You've taken the place of my conscience.

Asaka. Poor Zenran Sama.

Zenran. Yes. I must be strong. My darling.
(Squeezes ASAKA'S hand. The stage turns round.)

(Curtain.)

SCENE II

PERSONS IN THE SCENE

SHINRAN.

YUIEN.

Two Priests.

An Acolyte.

(SHINRAN SHŌNIN'S living room. A tidy room of eight mats, with a little shrine in one corner. A scroll with a vow written on it hangs in the ornamental alcove. Beside the bed, there is a low table with a book open on it, and in the other corner, a night lamp. Autumn plants grow luxuriantly in the garden. It is the evening of the same day. SHINRAN is sitting on the bed talking to the two Priests.)

First Priest. Then you still say you won't see him.

Shinran. Yes. (Nods.)

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Second Priest. I, too, think that'll be by far the best.

First Priest. For it wouldn't be pleasant to have the communicants fall to discussing it, would it?

Second Priest. There's no telling what sort of rumors would be started by the gossipy public. And it would be a catastrophe to have it prove a stumbling block to the young disciples.

First Priest. Gradually there are beginning to be irregularities in conduct among the young disciples. There are those who say they've seen one of them coming out of a certain tea-house in Kiya Machi.

Second Priest. The world says it's because the Shinshū teaching doesn't condemn debauchery.

First Priest. It's a time when the other sects, envying our prosperity, are looking for excuses to find fault.

Second Priest. Anyway it's a critical time demanding prudence. (*Pauses.*) The truth is, there are rumors that Yuien Dono goes to see Zenran Sama from time to time.

Shinran. It seems so. Though Yuien's said nothing to me about it.

First Priest. Somehow his conduct's a little strange. The other day, he was defending Zenran furiously.

Shinran. I'll speak to him.

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Second Priest. They say Zenran's living in a continual round of pleasure at a certain tea-house in Kiya Machi.

Shinran. He's a sore trouble to me. And I'm sorry he's always a worry to you.

First Priest. No. We only pray that no injury may come to your merit.

Second Priest. I wonder why such a child was ever born to so pure a man as you.

First Priest. If he only wouldn't come up to Kyōto, it would be all right.

Shinran. I'm earnestly praying that he may not embarrass other people. (*Hangs his head and bites his lip. They are all silent for a moment.*)

First Priest. It's time for the evening service, so we must be going. I'm sorry we've told you this worthless stuff to-day.

Shinran. Not at all.

Second Priest. Please don't worry too much about it. Your health mustn't be injured.

Shinran. Thanks.

First Priest. Then we'll see you later on.

Second Priest. Please take care of yourself.

(*The two Priests go out. SHINRAN shuts his eyes and falls into thought. Enter an Acolyte.*)

Acolyte. It's grown dark. I'll light up. (*He lights the lamp.*)

Shinran. Where's Yuien?

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Acolyte. Soon after noon, he said he had some business to attend to and went out. He'll probably be back right away now. He said he'd be back in time for the evening service.

Shinran. Oh.

Acolyte. How do you feel this evening?

Shinran. Thanks, I feel fine. To-day you worked hard cleaning the garden.

Acolyte. If I neglect it for a moment, the weeds spring up immediately.

Shinran. You must be tired. Go to sleep early to-night.

Acolyte. All right. Then if you wish anything, please call me. (*Goes out.*)

(*The bell in the main hall is heard ringing in the evening service.*)

Shinran (*sitting straight up in bed*). Namu Amida Butsu. Namu Amida Butsu. (*Closes his eyes. Enter YUIEN.*)

Yuien. I've just come back. (*Puts his hands to the mats.*)

Shinran. Ah, you've come.

Yuien. I'm late.

Shinran. Where've you been?

Yuien. To Kiya Machi.

Shinran. Oh.

Yuien. I'm sorry it took so long. Your supper?

Shinran. I've already had it. I thought of waiting for you, but I ate a while ago.

Yuien. And I didn't serve you.

Shinran. Never mind. (*Pauses.*) You've not eaten yet, have you?

Yuien. I don't want anything to-night.

Shinran. Are you unwell? Eat a little anyway. (*He looks into YUIEN'S face.*)

Yuien. No, it's probably because I walked a little fast. I'll take something afterwards.

Shinran. Oh. Be careful. You're not naturally strong.

Yuien. Thanks. How are you to-night?

Shinran. Practically well. I'm so well I'm almost ashamed to be like this. But for you, I think I'd get up.

Yuien. I'm glad. But please be careful a little longer. Yours is a precious life. (*Pauses.*) Aren't you cold? The nights have grown very chilly.

Shinran. No. They make me think clearly and feel fine.

Yuien. Autumn's well advanced. This morning I went out into the garden to cut flowers to offer to the Buddha, but the frost covered everything. Many of the flowers are faded.

Shinran. The leaves'll soon be falling from the trees.

Yuien. The time's near for the gardener to grumble

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because the leaves of that maidenhair tree behind the living quarters fall and fall and he must sweep endlessly.

Shinran. How rapidly the seasons change. When one grows old, they seem to change especially fast. This world is transitory and fleeting. Its transitoriness you can feel even in youth, but you can't feel its swiftness till you've grown old. Sometimes I've thought, "Is another year gone already?" and felt terrible. In human life there's a lonely feeling you can't know till you've grown old.

Yuien. Probably the world's no such place as we young people think it.

Shinran. The mistakes of youth are many. But men's eyes gradually open and they get so they can see the truth of life. But in youth there's nothing to do but live with a young heart. Youth should go directly into its destiny cutting straight ahead. A man can't have a deep old age without passing through a real youth.

Yuien. To me life's a mysterious land of joy and sorrow behind a curtain.

Shinran. That's just about it.

Yuien. The insects are crying, aren't they?
(*Listens.*)

Shinran. Just like a rain.

Yuien. I always think of home when I hear those voices. When autumn came, the insects used to cry

incessantly in the thicket out behind our house. My dead mother often took me on her back and went out into the dooryard garden. And when the cricket called *kōrogi* cried, she would tell me that it said, "Sew your rags, sew your rags," and when poor men heard it, they got their winter clothes ready. Then I had a singularly helpless feeling of sadness and the approach of the cold. So when I hear these crickets, I think of my mother.

Shinran. How many years has it been since Okane San died?

Yuien. The seventh anniversary will be this winter.

Shinran. Her death was a loss indeed. Such good mothers are rare.

Yuien. How she loved me! Every time I fall to thinking of my boyhood, I feel her warm love intensely.

Shinran. Have you heard from Saemon Dono?

Yuien. Yes, he says he's in good health. He's been unbearably lonely since mother's death. He feels the mutability of life and yearns earnestly for the black robe. And on the seventh anniversary of mother's death, he wants to become a priest; he's thinking of converting our house into a temple. He says for the principal image he intends to worship that figure with the broken hand you gave him as a keepsake.

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Shinran. He's finally made up his mind to become a priest, has he?

Yuien. It's been his desire for a long time, you know. He says the name of the temple will be, "The Temple of the Stone Pillow." He says it has reference to your sleeping with a stone for a pillow before the entrance that snowy night. And he asked me to ask you to give him a Buddhist name.

Shinran. He, too, has been sore distressed, you see.

Yuien. My father's dear to me. We haven't seen each other for a very long time.

Shinran. I haven't seen him since we parted that snowy morning. I can't forget that night.

Yuien. It was a frightfully stormy night, wasn't it? I remember it distinctly in my child's heart.

Shinran. You were still a little boy, weren't you? At about that time your mother was worrying because you were not strong.

Yuien. I still remember perfectly how out by the gate when you were leaving you folded me in your robe.

Shinran. I went away with no destination, not knowing whether we should ever meet again or not.

Yuien. I never dreamed that we should ever be bound up together as master and disciple.

Shinran. Our destiny was profound.

Yuien (remains silent for a moment, then speaks determinedly). Master, do you love me ?

Shinran. You ask a remarkable question. What do you think ?

Yuien. You do. (*Suddenly bursts into tears.*) You love me as I've never deserved. I'll never forget your kindness all my life. I'd do anything for you. I'd die. (*Sobs.*)

Shinran (putting his hand on YUIEN'S shoulder). What's the matter ? *Yuien.* What's excited you like this ?

Yuien. I rely upon your love. Please forgive Zenran Sama. Please see him. (*SHINRAN makes no reply.*) I can't bear it. Zenran Sama's a good man. He's unfortunate. Is there anybody who can hate him ? They're all evil. The world's out of tune. They've all crowded around him and made him what he is. He loves you. Please see him. Please forgive him. I'll go and get him at once. You don't know how delighted he'll be.

Shinran (controlling his pain and speaking quietly). Have you seen Zenran ?

Yuien. Yes. To-day a messenger came from him to me, and I went to see him without letting you know. I lied. What I said about going to Kiya Machi on business wasn't true. Zenran Sama's in Kiya Machi. I lied.

Shinran. How did you find Zenran ?

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Yuien (resolutely). When I got there, he was drinking *saké* with harlots and a tea-house clown.

Shinran. Did he call you to such a bout? You in your purity and innocence? Licentious men can't consider the danger of making a little one stumble.

Yuien. But he said he hated to show me such a place. And when the waitress wanted me to drink *saké*, he told her not to press it on me. And he said, though he was soiled himself, he respected the pure. He invited me to see him just as he always lives. He didn't want to show me all that, but he didn't want to deceive me.

Shinran. Why did he send for you?

Yuien. He's lonely. He said he wanted to see me and talk to me. He's a very lonesome man when he's driven to calling me for solace. He seemed utterly forlorn. He looked truly unhappy as he sat recovering from his drunkenness amid a confusion of *saké* cups, trays and samisen. I'd never seen a man so lonely-looking before.

Shinran. The loneliness of human life is not such a shallow thing as to yield to *saké* and women, you see. Many weak men turn to *saké* and women when they're lonely. And they're made more and more lonely. Their souls are laid waste. They fall into an unnatural, ugly and bad condition of heart. That's not unreasonable, but it's not the right way. There's something in it of self-delusion, evasion and deception.

A strong man must embrace that loneliness and go on living. If it's man's fate, he must accept it. He must live his life with that loneliness in it. By the religious life is meant that kind of life. The place where the roads of dissipation and faith divide is treacherous. It's the difference between going straight on and deceiving.

Yuien. Zenran is not living his life with any assurance in it. So he's the more unhappy. Feeling as he does now, I think there's probably no other way for him to live. As I listened to his painful story, I felt oppressed. Not knowing what to say to console him, I simply sat with feelings of sympathetic grief pounding in my breast. I felt not the least tendency to blame him. I simply saw before me a man in pain and torture. And when I tried to think who should be blamed for his injury, I was left with nothing but irrational feelings. As I pondered on my way home, I felt dizzy. For there was nothing my head could comprehend. I came home brooding over the one thing I made out clearly in the tempest of all my thoughts. That was that Zenran Sama must be forgiven.

Shinran. I, too, think him a pitiful fellow. He may have many good excuses. But he's injured the lives of others. One poor woman died. One virtuous young man's heart was broken for life. Several families have been robbed of their peace. All this

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was due to his weakness. He's receiving his reward.

Yuien. But he's not alone to blame. The injury to his whole life must be blamed on the unnatural will of society. It's the law of heaven that men and women who love should be married. It's the sin of society that that law's broken. It's too cruel to blame him alone. ☉

Shinran. Society's receiving its reward too. The inharmoniousness of the world arises out of the punishment people are receiving as they go on injuring each other like that. It's because the karma accumulated by the giving and receiving of injuries since the most distant antiquity is all confused. We who've received our specks of life in the knots of that tangled thread are burdened from birth with inharmonious destinies. Moreover, the punishment for our sins and faults will descend forever upon our descendants.

Yuien. Our existence is truly perilous, isn't it?

Shinran. If there was no Buddha, I would probably curse this existence before anybody else and more fiercely than anybody else. But in this world his grace is felt more deeply the deeper our misery and sin. The harmony of the world becomes all the more complex and delicate. "Namu Amida Butsu" untangles the whole confusion of karma.

Yuien. Zenran Sama says he can't believe in that "Namu Amida Butsu."

Shinran. Why not?

Yuien. How his explanation moved me! Zenran Sama blames himself beyond his deserts. He says that while committing foul sins as he is he hasn't the gall to pray that he be saved as he is. "At least that's my conscience, my pride," he said, and the tears shone in his eyes. "The prayer to Amida is suitable for a pure man like father, but for a soiled man like me, penance is more becoming. I want rather to be punished. I'm a child doomed to destruction," he said and wept. I loved him unendurably.

Shinran. If he would but become a little more tractable. He's in rebellion against himself and others. He flatters himself when he says he wants to be punished. He mocks the terrors of the fires of Hell. It's impossible to bear to the end the bodily pain of even one finger burning. (*Pauses.*) It seems he hasn't yet lost that which he must lose.

Yuien. If Zenran Sama should die now, where would his soul go?

Shinran (*his face becoming tense in the effort to bear his pain*). To Hell.

Yuien. Oh, master, please see him. Please save him. Don't you love that child of yours? (*SHINRAN is silent.*) You're too strict. With him alone, you're too severe. If he weren't your child, you'd have forgiven him long ago. Once Ryōnen Dono committed

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a sin far worse than his. But you forgave him. And when Yuishin Dono did wrong last spring and all the disciples advised you to expell him, you protected him alone. Why are you strict with Zenran Sama only? I don't understand. You're always telling me that the love of flesh and bone and of husband and wife is not pure love. You teach me that we must call every man our neighbor and love him. Then isn't Zenran Sama, too, a neighbor of yours? Isn't it right to forgive that neighbor? Until to-day I've never once opposed you. But in this matter only I must oppose you. It's the prayer of my life. Please make him your neighbor and see him.

Shinran (tearfully). I understand well how you feel. I'm glad. (*Thinks.*) Does Zenran say he wants to see me?

Yuien. At first he said, "It wouldn't be for his good to see my father now." But when at leaving I asked what he'd do if you said you'd see him, he said he'd gladly go to you.

Shinran. He felt resentment toward me, didn't he?

Yuien. No. He said he'd wronged you greatly. And he anxiously asked many things about you. It seems that his coming up to the capital this time was because his heart was drawn to you. And his calling me was because he wanted to make various inquiries into your circumstances.

Shinran. The truth is, I'm always worrying about

that boy. Especially when I think of his mother, it's almost more than I can bear at times. I feel that his unhappiness is my crime.

Yuien. I heard about that, too, from Zenran Sama to-day.

Shinran. What did he say?

Yuien. He said, "Everything's the sorrow and fate of human life. I feel no desire to blame my father."

Shinran. H'm. (*Thinks.*) After all, it's my crime, my fault. If I may call it that. I meant to treat Asahime—that was his mother's name—like a neighbor. But in the end that was impossible. I was weak. I was overcome by the fervent love of the gentle but determined girl. My heart was lonely as a wilderness with my long pilgrimage in the north country. Why couldn't I treasure faithfully the memory of Tamahi and live alone? When I think of that, my feelings of self-censure are unbearable. I'm in agony. (*YUIEN remains silent.*) But Asahime was too good and gentle to blame. She gave the impression of weakness. Though strong passion was concealed behind that. How terribly she wept when I came back to Kyōto!

Yuien. She's gone now, isn't she?

Shinran. Yes. (*Pauses.*) I've lost many loved ones. The compassionate Hōnen Sama, the chaste Tamahi, the worthy Okane San—

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Yuien. And that filial first son, Hani Sama.

Shinran (*closing his eyes*). Now they're all beautiful Buddhas. And they're all taking care of us compassionately. They forgive all the wrongs I did them on earth.

Yuien. With the hearts that have seen off the dead in loneliness, I think we who are left must live together in friendliness. For that reason, too, please hurry and forgive Zenran Sama.

Shinran. I have forgiven him. There's no one who can judge him but the Buddha.

Yuien. Then please see him. (*SHINRAN is silent.*) Master. You really want to see him, I think.

Shinran. I do. (*Puts force into his voice.*) Though he's profligate, I recognize his sincerity and love him. Never has a day passed that I haven't thought of him. I want to see his face. I'm hungry to hear his voice.

Yuien. Please see him. Master. Both father and son want to meet. Then why is it such a difficult thing for you to see him? Isn't it really simple?

Shinran. Truly it's simple. If this were the harmonious Pure Land, it would be a spontaneous and easy thing. This is the inconvenient world where that simple thing can't be. (*Throws strength into his voice.*) The peace of many people hangs on that simple thing. Many powers come together to prevent me. Now I'm keenly aware of the oppres-

sion of those powers. I have no strength to oppose them. (*Writhes.*) I can't see him.

Yuien. Yes. Please see him. Please see him. You act too much from a sense of duty. Don't think of him as your son ; make him a neighbor, make him an absolute stranger—

Shinran (painfully). Ah, if I could have done that ! I believe I should think that way. I teach you to think that way. But I can't. A moment ago you said I was gentle with others and strict with my own son. That's because I love my own son only and can't love other men. I love Zenran. I'm often inclined to take him to my bosom and blame others. Just as a fond mother embraces a mischievous child and scolds its poor nurse. I know the weakness of my heart. And since I do, it's difficult to pardon Zenran. I must think of the family of the woman who died on Zenran's account, of her husband, and of his family—of all those who are cursing Zenran. Their eyes are saying, "Because of your son—" "Because of my son—" I must say in apology. Especially since I don't love these people. Though I don't see him, I don't feel the torment of not loving him. In my heart, I love him to that extent.

Yuien. I'm in torment. I don't understand.

Shinran. Moreover most of my disciples would not like to see me meet Zenran. A while ago Chiō and Eiren came and urged me not to see him.

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Yuien. My, without understanding your heart!

Shinran. They spoke intending it for my good. But, though I'm sorry to confess it, it didn't sound pleasantly in my ears.

Yuien. I wonder why they all think that way.

Shinran. There are few warm-hearted men like you.

Yuien. Do you really intend not to see him?

Shinran. Yes. It would disturb the peace of the people around me.

Yuien. Then what'll become of Zenran Sama? How disappointed he'll be! And more important, what'll become of his straying soul?

Shinran. That's what worries me most. If there was no way for his soul to be saved but through me, and if I had the power to save it, I'd probably meet him and preach to him, though I shut my eyes to all other feelings. But I haven't the power to save him. His salvation or abandonment rests in the holy will of Buddha. I can't carry out my plans as I please. Since he, too, is a child of Buddha, he can't escape from the protection of Buddha. I think it improbable that he'll be cast out. All I'm allowed to do is to pray. Without meeting him, I'll pray for him morning and evening. I'll pray, "Oh, Buddha, please save that child!" In the end, love must come back to the Amida prayer. That alone is true ultimate love. When I think fondly of him, I feel like folding

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my hands and reciting, "Namu Amida Butsu." You, too, please pray for that unfortunate child.

Yuien. I'll pray with you. Ah, but how lonely your heart must be!

Shinran. This is the extremity of man's affection.

Yuien. I can't bear it. Human life is too lonely.

Shinran. In human life there are still more lonely things. Things it's difficult for man to part with gradually fall away. How many I've lost up to this time! (*As if to himself.*) Ah, ye perishable things, perish. Ye crumbling things, crumble. And ye true things that can't be broken by fate, alone remain. I want to go to the grave grasping them fast. (*Prays in silence.*)

Yuien. Ah, I'm afraid.

(*Curtain.*)

ACT IV—SCENE I

PERSONS IN THE SCENE

YUIEN.

KAEDE.

Four little Girls.

(The cemetery at Kurodani. Countless tombs, stone monuments and images of Jizō stand in close rows. There are trees that cast deep shadows. A little meadow, with clumps of wild rose and raspberry scattered about here and there. A road comes out from beyond a thicket, crosses the meadow and disappears in the trees. It is an afternoon in spring one year later than the events in Act III. YUIEN is sitting on the stump of a tree alone.)

Yuien. Spring's here. The buds of the trees and grasses are all ablaze. The earth drinks in the sunlight and is swollen and mellow. Little birds are singing with happiness. Ah, the preciousness of myriad flowers! I feel as if the joy of young life's welling up out of my body. *(Stands up and walks to and fro.)* She ought to be here now. *(Gazes through the thicket.)* Maybe circumstances are unfavorable, and she can't get away. I barely sneaked out myself. *(Pauses.)* Gradually I've got used to lying. *(Stands still and thinks, then suddenly becomes*

all animation.) No, now I can't think of such things.
(*Walks again.*) In these high spirits, I can't stay still at all. (*Bursts into song.*)

Of early spring the gladness, gladness !

Heart that smiles in budding fern !

As for you I gather, gather,

On my sleeve the snowflakes burn.

On my garment's sleeve—

(*Enter KAEDE from beyond the thicket.*)

Kaede. Yuien Sama, I've come. Have you waited ?

Yuien. Yes, a very long time.

Kaede (coming to his side). Conditions at the house were a little bad. But anyway I hurried and ran.
(*She is out of breath.*)

Yuien. My heart almost failed me at the thought that you might not be able to get out at all.

Kaede. I forced my way out through impossible difficulties. But having made so firm an agreement with you, I couldn't, spite of anything, let you wait here alone in vain. But I must get back early to-day.

Yuien. Don't talk of going the minute you get here. (*Looks into her face.*) How I've longed to see you !

Kaede (drawing near). I, too, have longed, have longed. (*Her eyes fill with tears. They both fall silent for a moment.*)

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Yuien. Let's sit down here. (*He sits down on the grass.*)

Kaede (*sitting down beside him*). Won't somebody see us?

Yuien. People seldom pass. But if they do, isn't it all right? We're doing no wrong.

Kaede. But I'd feel ashamed.

Yuien. I feel that I haven't seen you for ages. How many days has it been since we parted in the back room at the Matsunoya?

Kaede. Half a month.

Yuien. How long that half month has been! And all the while, I've thought of nothing but you.

Kaede. And you've not been out of my mind for a moment. Times without number has my love made me want to fly to you instantly. But I was without resource. I was beside myself with impatience.

Yuien. And I, even when I'm reciting the sutras at the temple, am absent-minded and thinking of nothing but you. My happiest time is in the evening after the service when, thinking of you, I walk alone in the quiet and deserted garden.

Kaede. You're lucky to have such times. I'm in a painful fix. All day long I'm in a turmoil and have no time to think steadily of anything.

Yuien. If only we could meet more often!

Kaede. That time before, if "big sister" hadn't interceded for me, I couldn't have met you.

Yuien. What's Asaka San doing ?

Kaede. Since Zenran Sama's departure for his home province, she's passed lonely days.

Yuien. It's through her kindness I'm able to send you letters. Recently I sat up late writing you a long one. Then I put it in the bosom of my garment and went out. It was a night of liquid moonlight. Though I felt it would be utterly impossible to meet you, I turned naturally toward Kiya Machi and before I knew it was at the gate of the Matsunoya. A light shone through the paper windows up-stairs, and shadows were moving on them. I thought you were probably there. Hating to leave, I hung about. Then Asaka San came out. I handed her the letter quickly and hurried back to the temple.

Kaede. That night in the darkness at the foot of the stairs, she said she had something nice for me and handed me I knew not what. I looked at it holding it up to the paper lamp in the hall. It was a letter from you ! How delighted I was ! I read it slowly syllable by syllable. I hated to come to the end. Your letters are really wonderful. I'm full of thoughts, but I'm mortified by a limping brush that won't write.

Yuien. Please write, won't you ?

Kaede. But I know only the simple symbols of the syllabary. (*Blushes.*) And I'm a poor writer.

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Yuien. They're good enough. Moreover, if you write what's in your heart straight off without ornament, your letters will be good naturally. If only the thought's sincere.

Kacde. If it's a matter of sincerity, I yield to none. After this I'll write you. (*Thinks a moment.*) It's impossible. How can I send them to you.

Yuien. That is a question. You can't go out. It would be awkward for a messenger to come to the temple.

Kacde. Isn't there some good way?

Yuien (*thinking*). I'll go for them.

Kacde. Can you do that?

Yuien. Please write a letter and keep it. I'll go to those stone steps under the projecting balcony of the Matsunoya and whistle; you please come down by the back entrance that gives out to the river-bed and give me the letter.

Kacde. Then I can see your face for a moment anyway, can't I? But if I'm found out, it'll be terrible. (*Lowers her voice.*) "Mother" thinks very badly of our intimacy. She says, "If a man wants to enjoy himself, let him bring money and enjoy himself," and she's very angry.

Yuien (*clenching his fists*). If I only had the money!

Kacde. It's all right. You're the one man with whom I associate as no patron. However able you

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might be, I'd rather die than be bought with your money. (*Tears stand in her eyes.*)

Yuien. You're having a bad time on account of me, aren't you?

Kaede. I don't care. Rather, aren't things going badly with you at the temple?

Yuien (*looking gloomy*). There seem to be some of the disciples who think things a little suspicious.

Kaede. Doesn't the superior know?

Yuien. No. (*Looks uneasy.*)

Kaede. What did you say to get away to-day?

Yuien. That I was going to Kurodani to pay my respects at the Master's tomb.

Kaede. What did he say?

Yuien. He said while I was at it to go round by the Shinnyodō and take my time about getting back.

Kaede. Oh. (*Thinks.*)

Yuien. It grieves me almost beyond endurance to lie to the superior. This morning I went to Kurodani and, kneeling before Hōnen Sama's tomb, begged forgiveness from the bottom of my heart.

Kaede (*suddenly looking depressed*). It's my influence that's put lies into your pure mouth.

Yuien. No. It isn't.

Kaede. Please forgive me. (*Clasps her hands.*)

Yuien. I'm at fault. (*Pulls her hands apart and continues gripping them firmly.*) There's no necessity

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for perjuring myself; I ought to tell the superior the plain truth. I'm simply a coward.

Kaede. But if you tell him such things, won't you be scolded?

Yuien. We're not doing anything bad. We must first of all have that faith in ourselves. Kaede San. Do you understand? You mustn't be cringing.

Kaede. But you're a priest. And I'm what I am. Of all women I'm the most despised in the world, a harlot.

Yuien. It's not the belief of the Shin sect that a priest must not love. And it's not the teaching of the superior that one should be despised because she's a harlot. Though a harlot, if she loves sincerely, her love's pure and stainless. There are in the world many daughters of good families whose love is mean and stained. I don't associate with you as with a harlot. And you've just said you don't associate with me as with a guest. I was thankful for that. For you truly have a chaste heart. I love you. (*He holds her hands firmly in his.*)

Kaede. But I, I—(*Weeps.*) My body's stained. (*Covers her face with her sleeve and cries.*)

Yuien (embracing her). Kaede San, Kaede San.

Kaede. Please cast me off. I'm not worth your love. I'm stained. Your body's like a pure, pure jewel. I don't know how to apologize enough. I

can bear my lot in tears. I've borne everything up till now. I've resigned myself to being the plaything of men all my life. I've determined to be content with even that shame as my fate. For there's nothing else to do. I'm weak. And everybody treats me in such a way as to make me resigned to my fate. Every guest, every single one, has used me as a plaything. And they've compelled me to think myself but that. I've got used to it. I've decided that I'm a victim of pleasure, and the guests are tormenting devils. You're the very first man that ever treated me as a maiden. You're the first that ever taught me that even I'm a human being. You went so far as to show me that even I'm a child of Buddha. (*Weeps.*) I never dreamed there could be a man who would treat me as you've treated me. I thought you were like an angel from heaven. As I associated with you, my lost maidenhood gradually came back to me. My maidenly hopes were reborn. Moistened by your rain-like love, my maidenly hopes, joys, life, oh, my love, which had been crowded down in my breast while in the bud, burst forth all at once. I was in a trance of delight. And I forgot my position and my circumstances. I dreamed of the world denied me. Now I understand clearly the position in which I stand. I must not blemish your jewel-like lot. Please cast me off. I'm resigned. I shall never forget you all my life. I shall live on guarding

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the memory of this happy dream which I've been permitted to dream for a while.

Yuien. It's no dream. It's no dream. I think to make our love the most real of realities. I respectfully cherish it as the essence of all beautiful things that exist in majesty between heaven and earth and compare it to the stars shining in heaven. Let's prize this treasure born between us. Let's nourish it. When I think it's for love, I'm all energy. Power boils up in me. Let's fight bravely against all enemies who would interfere with our love. You, too, leave sad thoughts alone and keep your heart strong. To perfect our love, difficulties are stretched out before us like mountains. We must climb over them to victory. No thought could be so far from the truth as that our love's a dream. Kaede San, mine's no such fickle heart as that. When I but think of love, my eyes fill with tears. (*Weeps.*) Instead of sweet and delightful things, I think of difficulties and struggles. I think of the hundredfold pilgrimage. Love's a pilgrimage. It's the daily pilgrimage. (*Looks fixedly into Kaede's face, then folds her tightly in his arms.*) You're distracted over the contamination of your body. I know how you feel. It must be unbearable. At the thought of it, I, too, have reeled. I've not been able to sleep nights. I've lain in an agony of thought. But I've conquered that agony. It's not your sin. It's your misfortune. It's unjust

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to blame you. It's the sin of others. You're grieving thus because of the injury done you by others. For that, you're about to deny yourself the happiness of a lifetime. What's this! I curse this fact. It's terrible. It's unreasonable. It's all the work of demons. Oh, I defy these devils! (*Clenches his fists.*)

Kaede. They're all demons. They're heartless devils. Every night they come and force indignities upon me. They're none of them to be denied.

Yuien. On that beautiful little body. Oh! (*Staggers.*)

Kaede (*supporting YUIEN*). Yuien Sama! Yuien Sama!

Yuien. Beasts! I can't go on like this. (*To KAEDE.*) I must protect you from the claws of the demons. I must rescue you from that horrible situation at once. Be brave. You mustn't lose heart. Before long, before long, I'll help you out.

Kaede. But the body once defiled can never again—

Yuien. Don't say that sort of thing any more. By no means feel restrained before me on account of that. For it's not your sin. That's not all. Even if you yourself had been guilty of the worst of vile sins in the past, I should pardon them and love you.

Kaede (*with tears in her eyes*). Oh, do you love me so much as that?

Third Child. Here's another. It's a big one.

Fourth Child. I've got one too. Mine's bigger.

Third Child. Let's compare. (*They hold the flowers side by side and compare their lengths.*)

Fourth Child. Mine's a little longer.

Third Child. That's disappointing.

First Child. All come and see; here are some Jizō San with little bibs on.

(*The others go where the First Child is and look at the Jizō. They all laugh.*)

Second Child. They look like babies, don't they?
(*Strokes the head of a Jizō.*)

Third Child. How many are there in the row?

Fourth Child (counts). Six.

First Child. The fourth hasn't a head, has he?

Second Child. Ah, I know. These are what they call the Six Jizō.

Third Child. Who's Jizō?

Fourth Child. He's a Buddha, I think.

First Child. Then let's offer him these flowers.
(*Takes some wild camomile from the basket and puts it before a Jizō.*)

Second Child. Let's all worship. (*Kneels down and clasps her hands. All the children kneel in turn and press their hands together.*)

First Child. Shan't we go over by the pagoda in that forest?

Second Child. Yes, let's go.

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(They go into the grove and leave the stage singing.)

Kaede. Children are innocent things, aren't they?
(Thinks.)

Yuien. They're wholly sinless.

Kaede. They seem to have no troubles. *(Pauses.)*
I'd like to go back to that time once more. Then I
was happy. When father was still alive.

Yuien. You have no father. But I have no
mother.

Kaede. Where's your father?

Yuien. He's at home alone. In the country in
Hitachi.

Kaede. Hitachi's very far away, isn't it?

Yuien. Yes. It's far in the east across more than
ten provinces. Where's your mother?

Kaede. In the heart of the mountains of Banshū.
She's an invalid. *(Thinks.)* I wonder which is
worse, to have no mother or no father.

Yuien. If one has no mother, he doesn't know a
thing about his clothes, and this gives him trouble.

Kaede. But if one has no father, she's troubled
about her living. If I'd only had a father, there'd
have been no need for me to become what I am.

Yuien. Let's stop. It makes me feel very bad to
compare our misfortunes like this.

Kaede. When I was a child, I romped about and
played with my friends in utter ignorance of my
family's poverty. But those days were brief. When

I was thirteen, my father died, and then my mother and I had a hard time. There were times when we had nothing to eat. Meanwhile mother became ill. After that, we found it very difficult to keep alive. It was at that time. I went out barefoot every day to a Jizō which stood at the edge of the village. I prayed madly that my mother might recover. A moment ago when I saw the children worshipping Jizō, I thought of that time and tears came to my eyes. Pray as I might, she never got well.

Yuien. Then did you sell your body because there was nothing else to do?

Kaede. I didn't know very well what it meant to sell one's body. For I was only fourteen. A go-between came and urged me, saying that if I would go to Kyōto and serve, I could make much money. Mother said she wouldn't let me go. But I resolved to set out for Kyōto. For mother had neither medicine nor anything else. (*YUIEN listens in silence.*) With a small bundle in a cloth wrapper on my back, I was led by the go-between out of the village. My mother came out with me as far as the earth-covered corduroy bridge. When we parted, she embraced me and cried and cried—

Yuien. It must have been unbearable. Unbearably bitter.

Kaede. After I came to Kyōto, I was worked cruelly every day. I was obliged to practise on the

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samisen and sing. I couldn't learn well and was beaten with the plectrum. Between lessons everybody was after me to run errands and sweep as if they'd suffer loss if they didn't use me. Once I thought I'd rather die.

Yuien. Were you driven even to that?

Kaede. Yes. Once when I broke a dish, they scolded me cruelly and persistently. They abused me, calling me a dog and a pale-faced monkey. Even then I swept the garden without a word. For if I'd answered back, I'd have had a bad time of it. I took my dustpan and went out into the river-bed to throw away the trash. And I stood staring at the running water for a long time. It was then I thought I'd do away with myself.

Yuien. Naturally.

Kaede. But for big sister, I should have died in those days.

Yuien. Was Asaka San good to you?

Kaede. Yes. She took care of me in private and public. (*Pauses.*) After a younger girl came, I had it a little easier. But then I was forced to do abominable things.

Yuien. No more of that. No more of that. (*Shuts his eyes.*)

Kaede. Forgive me. There's no one but you to whom I can tell such things. I just drifted into talking about my personal affairs.

Yuien. Never mind that. I'm only troubled because I don't know what to say to comfort you. Please bear up patiently. That's all I can say. You're not alone in sadness. The superior, even, and Zenran Sama, too, are suffering from deep and unbearable sadness, though, of course, over other troubles. Still they bear up and live. You mustn't die. It's wrong to die. No matter how great your trouble, it's wrong to die. The superior says self-destruction's worse than murder. We must hold in the highest reverence the life given us by Buddha. It's often harder to live in this burning-house of a world than to die. The superior says that if we don't die at such times, but bear up, faith becomes possible in us.

Kaede. Can even such a one as I attain to faith?

Yuien. To be sure you can. Being pure as you are.

Kaede. I have no learning at all.

Yuien. Such things have nothing to do with faith. It's enough to have a heart that responds to sadness and love.

Kaede. What shall I do?

Yuien. You prayed to Jizō San that your mother might recover from her illness, didn't you? But she didn't recover. Then did you feel resentment toward Jizō San?

Kaede. Yes, I did.

Yuien. At such a time, not cursing the Buddha,

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you should have the faith to say, "Though this sorrow's come upon me, it's but the punishment for some previous sin of mine. But Buddha loves me. And he'll save me, sometime." That's faith. For it's the truth. That compassionate superior would not lie.

Kaede. Will Buddha save even a despised and contaminated woman like me?

Yuien. Of course he will. He forgives and saves people, no matter how bad they may be.

Kaede. I'm glad. Since I've been with you, I've gradually come to pray for the beautiful and good and am almost able to believe. In the past I saw and heard nothing but flattery and deception. I resigned myself in the belief that no such thing as love existed in this world. But recently I've begun to feel that I can wait for, hope for and believe in the warmth of the love that enfolds me. I've begun to feel as if a bright light from somewhere has entered into me.

Yuien. The people you've been thrown in with have been bad. From now on, you must think of bright and beautiful things.

Kaede. Men like you are fortunate. Every day you sit beside the noble superior listening to his pure words and before Buddha reciting the sutras. What hateful work is my daily round compared with yours. I loathe it with all my heart.

Yuien. I think from the bottom of my heart that

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to be beside the superior's a great blessing. But in a temple all's not pure, and there are many detestable men among priests. Temples and priests are not such great things. The important thing is a believing heart. I'll teach you everything I've learned from the superior. And what's more, I by no means mean to leave you forever where you are now.

Kacde. Please find a good way to really bring this about quickly. And lead me to be a good woman.

Yuien. Could I do anything else? (*Raises his shoulders.*)

Kaede. I've somehow become glad. (*Looks lovingly into YUIEN's face.*) Truly, keep me beside you always, won't you, please.

Yuien. I truly will.

Kaede. Oh, I'm glad. And I'll take good care of you. (*An evening bell booms. She stands up.*) For to-day, I must go back.

Yuien. Stay just a little longer.

Kacde. But if I'm late, I'll get into trouble again.

Yuien. Then just a little. Until the evening sun goes down behind that camphor tree. I'll not let you go. (*Makes as if to stop her.*)

Kacde (sitting down). I don't want to go at all either.

(*They are silent for a moment.*)

Yuien. Kaede San.

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Kaede. What?

Yuien. Kaede San. Kaede San. Kaede San.

Kaede. My! (*Opens her eyes wide.*)

Yuien. I want to call your name over and over and over again. No matter how often I call it, I can never grow tired of it.

Kaede (tearfully). I'll never leave you. Not unto the grave.

Yuien. When I think of love, I don't want to die. I want to live forever.

Kaede. But men all die, don't they? Look at the many graves here.

Yuien. Ever since I fell in love, death's plagued me strangely. (*As if to himself.*) Love and fate and death all have something in common that makes me feel their eternity. (*Thoughtfully.*) Possibly I may die young.

Kaede. Why?

Yuien. I'm weak of body.

Kaede. Is that possible? (*Both fall silent for a moment.*) Already the sun hangs on the camphor tree. (*Gets up.*)

Yuien. Ah, we can't help it. (*Stands up.*)

Kaede. Then I'll go.

Yuien. When'll we meet again?

Kaede. I can't fix a time. I'll tell you by letter later.

Yuien. As soon as you can.

Kaede. Yes. You'll surely come for it?

Yuien. Surely. I'll whistle.

Kaede. What'll you do now when you get back to the temple?

Yuien. I'll pray to Buddha in the vesper service.

Kaede. Ah. Probably I'll have to sing again.
(*Sighs. Then speaks resolutely.*) It can't be helped.
Then sayōnara.

Yuien. Sayōnara.

(*They embrace, then separate, and KAEDE goes off behind the thicket.*)

Yuier (*stands dazed, then sits down on the stump*).
Oh, I'm lonely, lonely. (*Puts his face in his hands and sits silently resting his head on his elbows.*)

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE II

PERSONS IN THE SCENE

KAEDE.

ASAKA.

MURAHAGI, a harlot.

SUMINO, a harlot.

A Waitress.

(*ASAKA'S room. The decorations are somewhat antique. A candle offering is burning in a little Bud-*

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dhist shrine. Kimono are hanging on a clothes rack. Two samisen hang on the wall, one of them in a bag. A lighted lantern, a mirror-stand and a brazier. There is a railing on the side toward the river. It is the evening of the same day. ASAKA, MURAHAGI and SUMINO are playing flower cards. For a moment they play in silence.)

Murahagi. Hello, the maple! If we're not careful, Asaka San'll get the blue banners.

Sumino. I won't make a slip. She needs the chrysanthemum.

Asaka. I'll make it surely.

Murahagi. There, an iris. I've thrown in three.

Sumino. You're playing a fine game, aren't you?

Murahagi. There aren't many cards left.

Asaka (turning a card). Here's the chrysanthemum. *(Frowning a little.)* Hello, that's a bore. It's a paulownia blank.

Sumino. That's too bad.

Murahagi (turning a card). Here's the chrysanthemum. It is.

Sumino. That spoils the blues.

Asaka. That's vexing.

Murahagi (laughing). I'm sorry. *(They play round in silence.)*

Sumino. That's all.

(They count their points. Enter the Waitress.)

Waitress. Sumino San. They've been calling you in the parlor for some time.

Sumino. I'll go rightaway. (*To MURAHAGI.*) That makes ten months. There are two left, aren't there? I guess I'll finish while we're at it.

Waitress. They're very tired of waiting.

Murahagi. If you don't go at once, it'll be bad for you afterwards.

Sumino. It can't be helped, can it?

Waitress. Then please come immediately. (*Goes out.*)

Sumino. Then I'll go. I'll play with you some time later. (*Goes out.*)

Murahagi. Shall we two play?

Asaka (dejectedly). Let's leave the flower cards. (*Putting up the cards.*) I've done nothing but lose to-night. (*Thinks.*) This year my star doesn't seem at all lucky.

Murahagi. It doesn't feel good to be beaten even at such a thing as flower cards, does it?

Asaka. Not a bit.

Murahagi. Haven't you been unwell of late?

Asaka. Why?

Murahagi. Somehow you don't look well. You're always downcast.

Asaka. It's my nature.

Murahagi. You've grown a little thin.

Asaka. Have I?

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Murahagi. You take things too hard. Turn happy-go-lucky like me.

Asaka. But everything's full of misery.

Murahagi. That's true enough. But in our position, when once we begin to worry about things, there's no end to it.

Asaka. There isn't, for a fact.

Murahagi. At first I, too, thought and thought and grieved and grieved as you do. For a while after I came, I did nothing but cry. But cry as I might, nothing came of it at all; so, convinced that it was a dead loss to go on brooding, I made up my mind to abandon thinking altogether. I decided to be satisfied if I could but get somehow through each day. Because if I should begin to worry about the future, I'd be so lonely I simply couldn't go on like this.

Asaka. I think I'd like to get to feel as you do. Moreover, there's nothing else to do. But perhaps it's my worrying nature. Things get on my nerves fearfully. (*Pauses.*) I too. I don't worry about the future so much any more. But to-day I've lost heart and am so lonely I don't know what to do.

Murahagi. Really, you're a melancholy soul, aren't you? When talking to you, even I'm drawn in and feel lonely. And I think again of the unhappiness that, rather than having forgotten, I'm trying hard to forget. (*Pauses.*) Come. Let's quit. Let's quit.

This sort of depressing talk. Isn't this the merry springtime? Let's talk about something more joyous.

Asaka. Really it is a spring evening, isn't it?

Murahagi. The streets are springlike and very gay. Early this evening when I was out in the window, amid the sound of light-seeming clogs, the people passing outside the grating talked of the cherry flowers.

Asaka. They'll be out in no time now, I suppose.

Murahagi. Let's all go out flower-viewing for a day.

Asaka. It would be nice. (*Falls to brooding.*)

Murahagi. Come to think of it, hasn't Kaede San got back yet?

Asaka. No, not yet.

Murahagi. I wonder where she went.

Asaka. When she left, she said she was just going over to worship at Kiyomizu for a moment.

Murahagi. She's awfully late, isn't she?

Asaka. She'll probably be back in a minute. Anyway she's only a child yet.

Murahagi. It doesn't look just that way, I tell you. (*Pauses.*) The truth is, "mother" got angry and told me about her.

Asaka. What did she say?

Murahagi. She said, "Kaede's way of doing things is impertinent. She gives herself to such a fellow as that overgrown priestling and neglects the house's

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business. It's too presuming to amuse oneself with a girl in the business without paying for it. The other guests are treated shabbily and I'm so troubled I don't know what to do. And there's that Asaka."

Asaka. Did she talk about me, too?

Murahagi. Yes, she said, "Asaka seems to be helping them to get together. It's wrong of her when she ought to be looking after her little sister."

Asaka. Did she say that?

Murahagi. She was angry, I'll tell you. If you don't watch out and that "mother" gets angry again, you'll have a lot of trouble.

Asaka. I'll tell you. (*Falls into a reverie.*)

Murahagi. I think Kaede's young and it's natural for her to get like that. I'm not without my own memories. But she's too impertinent. Though in the business, she wants to love just like a virgin.

Asaka. To "mother" that must be a trouble, but don't you see?

Murahagi. Anyway it's no good for the business. And Kaede San doesn't tell us anything, but goes about it all secretly. If she'd say this and this is true and ask it, I myself am not one who'd refuse to fix things up and bring them together once or twice. But that way of hers is not becoming.

Asaka. Since she's having a good time in secret without getting any money, she probably feels guilty and can't tell.

Murahagi. But she's too proud. To-day, since she was sneaking out quietly, I asked her where she was going, and she looked innocent and said, "Just over there." Because it riled me a little, I said, "Yes, just over to the temple, I suppose." And I told her how mother was angry and she mustn't neglect her work. Then wasn't her remark detestable? "I'm not doing anything wrong. I look at things a little differently from you, so it's all right and you please let me alone." That's what she said.

Asaka. Did she say that? When she comes back, I'll give her a good talking to, so please don't be offended, but forgive her. For by nature she's gentle.

Murahagi. She looks upon us too lightly.

Asaka. She's been brooding recently, too, and her nerves are on end. When she talked like that, it was probably because she'd thought herself to her wits' ends.

Murahagi. You spoil her too much. Mother said so recently. "Kaede's pride's due to Asaka's training," she said.

Asaka. It's no such thing.

Murahagi. Anyway, it'll be well for you to warn her a little. Everybody says so. For if you're mild with her, she gets stuck up.

Asaka. I'll warn her. Please forgive her. (*Tears come into her eyes.*)

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Murahagi. There's nothing for me to forgive or not to forgive. I just told you by the way. I don't think it's good for Kaede to go on as she is.

Asaka. Thanks. (*Bites her lip.*)

Murahagi. You needn't take it so much to heart. Then I'll be in again. (*Stands up.*)

Asaka. Oh, can't you stay a little longer?

Murahagi. I'll see you again. I got interested in the flower cards and haven't done my evening dressing yet.

Asaka. That's so. Then come again.

(*MURAHAGI goes out. ASAKA sits absent-mindedly for a little. Finally she puts the flower cards in the box. Then she loses herself in thought again. Soon coming back to herself, she gets up and, going over to the mirror-stand, sits down before it.*)

Asaka (looking into the mirror). Really I do look a little thin. (*Puts her hand to her cheek.*) It's not surprising if I am. (*Takes a comb out of a drawer in the stand and begins to comb her hair.*) Why do I fix myself up like this? That I should have to beautify my face to flatter the detestable men who come to trifle with me, to flatter my own enemies! No, now I don't think of such things, but simply through habit go every evening to my mirror. That was still well enough while I yet believed in my own charms. (*Pauses.*) How my hair comes out! (*Cleaning the hair from the comb.*) Making capital of

one's weak body, using it unreasonably and taking out of it every ounce of work it can do, and then, when it can no longer work,—(*Trembles.*) Ah, I won't think of that, I won't think of that.

(*The sound of a hand-drum comes in from another room. Enter KAEDE. Seeing ASAKA, she weeps aloud.*)

Asaka (*going near KAEDE and looking at her intently*). Kaede San. What's the matter? Kaede San.

Kaede. It's too much. It's too much. (*Trembles. Her ornamental hair-pin falls out.*)

Asaka. What's the matter? All at once. (*Puts the hair-pin back for her.*) Come, sit down. (*Sits KAEDE down beside the brazier and takes her place beside her.*)

Kaede (*suppressing her tears*). "Mother" scolded me cruelly. When I came home she called me. It's my fault. I came back late. But I couldn't get back. Anyway she spoke too cruelly.

Asaka. I thought that was probably it.

Kaede. She railed at me mercilessly as if she'd lay hands on me. She used the cruelest words she could. I don't care. Anyway when I'm up against her, I'm like a weak little worm. Whatever I say, it's no use, and I'm used to scoldings now. But she said things about him so bad that I couldn't sit by and listen.

Asaka. About Yuien Sama, too?

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Kaede. She said a man who enjoys himself without paying is just like a thief. She compared him to a thieving cat that snatches fish from the kitchen.

Asaka. My, she was nasty.

Kaede. I was so angry that I said, "No, that man's pure and gentle as a dove." Then she said, "You'll talk back, will you?" and struck me with her pipe.

Asaka. She struck you?

Kaede. Yes. Here, with all her might. (*She rubs her knee.*) And she said I couldn't go out at all any more.

Asaka. She's cruel! She's always rough, but it's going too far to strike you, when it seems it would be enough to warn you.

Kaede. Murahagi San surely peached to her. To-night she was by her putting in one ill-natured sarcasm and biting remark after another.

Kaede. Murahagi San, too? For them all to band together and abuse a little girl like you! (*Pauses.*) Murahagi San was here until a little while ago talking to me. She was angry because, she said, you're proud and despise your elder sisters. And she doesn't like it because you don't confide in her.

Kaede. Horrible! To confide in that woman! Could I bring myself to talk frivolously of the precious love I treasure in my heart to that light and heartless

busybody. Truly you're the only one. The only one to whom I tell everything. Moreover, what she says about my being proud may be so for all I know. Once you told me, didn't you? You hate a woman who, no matter what her position, has no pride of any sort in her heart.

Asaka (tearfully). You remember well. Ah, but for a harlot whom men consider the meanest of beings, it may be foolish to think of such things! Kaede San. I have nothing to say. I only love you. There's nothing to do but bear everything. Nothing but to be resigned,—ah, how lonely is the feeling of resignation!

Kaede. I understand. Sister. (*Grows tearful.*) Without you, I don't know what would have become of me ere now. In my heart I fold my hands in prayer. (*They fall silent. There is no sound but the thump of the hand-drum. KAEDE goes to the railing and looks out.*) Sister, come see. The moon's coming up over Higashi Yama.

Asaka (going to KAEDE's side and leaning on the railing). The outline of the mountain's grown a little bright, hasn't it?

Kaede. How beautiful are the lights on the opposite bank!

Asaka. There are a few people on the bridge, aren't there?

Kaede. When I look on a scene like that, I feel

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strangely drawn to people. (*They stand for a while looking at the night view in silence.*)

Asaka. Where did you meet him to-day?

Kaede. In the cemetery behind the tomb of the saint at Kurodani.

Asaka. Were you glad? (*Smiles.*)

Kaede. Of course. But our pain's greater than our happiness. And we cried.

Asaka. Why?

Kaede. When we two are together, we become sad naturally. And for some reason or other, he weeps easily.

Asaka. Because he's gentle. When you meet, what do you talk about? (*Smiles.*)

Kaede (happily). We talk about all sorts of things. How we've longed to see each other, our letters, our lives, the future,—

Asaka (seriously). What do you say about the future?

Kaede. That we'll get married. (*Rapidly.*) I say I'm not worthy. I ask him to cast me off because of what I am. But he says he'll marry me in spite of everything. He says that in the Shin sect priests may have wives.

Asaka. Then he doesn't care about your bodily pollution?

Kaede. No. When he thought of that, his anguish was so great he couldn't sleep nights. But he con-

quered that anguish. He says, "The pollution of your body isn't your sin, it's your misfortune." And that's not all, but he says, "Though of your own accord you had polluted your body, I'd forgive and love you."

Asaka (tearfully). His is indeed a sincere and warm heart.

Kaede. Yuien Sama's sincere. Even when with me, sometimes his talk becomes serious as a sermon. And I like to listen to such talk. I like him best when, with sober face, he's telling me about things I don't understand very well, about beauty and truth.

Asaka (smiling). Then haven't you done anything yet?

Kaede (seriously). No. There's nothing of that kind.

Asaka. Really there's not another man like that in the world. Treasure him.

Kaede. I do. I feel unworthy.

Asaka. I, too, like him from the bottom of my heart. If you were carrying on with some hateful and low fellow, I'd refuse to handle your letters for you, but with him it's different.

Kaede. You've truly helped me greatly. Yuien Sama likes you, too. Recently he asked many things about you anxiously. And many times over he said he was grateful.

Asaka. The other night everything went fine.

When I chanced to go out to the gate, he was walking about in the moonlight. I felt such pity that the tears came into my eyes. I ran to him and said, "Haven't you something for Kaede San?" and he said, "Please give her this," and handing me a letter, hastened off in the other direction.

Kaede. He said if you hadn't met him that time, he'd probably have passed the whole night loitering about.

Asaka. He wouldn't hesitate to do that. (*Smiles.*) But I've got a good job, haven't I?

Kaede. My. Do you say such things? (*Smiles.*)

Asaka (suddenly looking gloomy). How do you intend to meet him after this?

Kaede (looking worried). I wonder. I'm worried to death about it. After mother's attitude to-night, she probably won't let me out at all. And Yuien Sama can't come here.

Asaka. Not unless he raises the money.

Kaede. However much money he might have, I wouldn't be bought with it by him. Only to-day we vowed, I that I wouldn't think of him as a guest and he that he'd treat me as a maiden. He said again and again that I mustn't think of myself as ignoble.

Asaka. Then there's nothing for you to do but give up the business, is there?

Kaede. Yuien Sama says he'll soon help me do that.

Asaka. H'm. (*Thinks.*) Has he anything in view, do you suppose?

Kaede (*uneasily*). I wonder.

Asaka. Though he's sincere, the affairs of the world by no means run in a straight line.

Kaede. He doesn't know the first thing about the world. He hasn't as much discernment as I have.

Asaka. That's probably true, indeed.

Kaede. He said he'd confess to the superior and talk it over with him. That seems to be his only dependence.

Asaka. To that Shinran Sama?

Kaede. Yes. He says the superior doesn't hold that priests shouldn't love. He says he helps him in everything. He says he doesn't despise any woman because she's a harlot.

Asaka. I've heard from Zenran Sama that he knows everything, but still—

Kaede. Sister! What do you suppose will come of me?

Asaka. I wonder. They say that not all the disciples are good.

Kaede. Truly I'm utterly forlorn.

Asaka. Even if you are to marry him, in the meantime how'll you meet him?

Kaede. Since there's no other way, we've agreed that he's to go round into the river-bed and give a signal from the stone steps, and I'll go out by the

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back entrance and we'll exchange letters. If we're slow and get caught, it'll be awful, but anyway I'll see his face for a moment.

Asaka. Do you want to meet as badly as that?

Kaede. Even for a glimpse. (*Pauses.*) Yuien Sama says he spends many sleepless nights. He thinks that much of even such a thing as I.

Asaka (kindly). Is that why you love him with body and soul?

Kaede. Yes. (*Nods tearfully.*)

Asaka (changing her mood). It'll all come out right. I'll pray for that. When I spoke, I meant that it probably couldn't happen at once. All sorts of difficulties may come up, but, if your two hearts are only firm, your desire will surely be fulfilled. Perseverance is the first thing.

Kaede. I'll persevere through any anguish.

Asaka. You must make your spirit strong. Mine soon grows weak and I'm useless. You must protect your own happiness with courage. Everybody treats a gentle person selfishly and takes lightly from him forever that which he treasures above his life. And calling it justice, they make him bear it. Zenran Sama's always telling me. When there's no determination to see justice through to the end, he says, the lukewarm effort to establish it rather results afterwards in trouble for others. If Zenran had joined hearts with the girl he loved in the beginning and

had fought hard for their happiness, they wouldn't all have come to grief, and he needn't have wept. Again, if once one decides to sacrifice his own happiness, he must consider himself as dead and lead his whole life in loneliness and strength. But a gentle soul can't do that. At first he's entangled in justice, and afterwards he can't bear his loneliness. (*Pauses.*) He's truly unfortunate. (*Pauses.*) You mustn't give in.

Kaede. I'll strive with all my might. To-day Yuién Sama, too, said to fight every difficulty and win without fail. Big sister, you'll help me, too, won't you?

Asaka. I'll do anything for you.

Kaede. I'll never forget your kindness. (*Her eyes fill with tears.*)

Asaka. I feel as if you're really my little sister.

Kaede. And I feel as if you're really my big sister.

Asaka. Do you remember how when you first came to this house, you came to my room and, putting your hands to the mats and bowing, said, "Henceforth I rely on your friendship?" Ever since then, I've been strangely fond of you. Earlier, mother had said to me, "A new girl's coming, so make her your little sister and train her." But I hadn't thought much about it. But at first glance of you, I felt an indescribable pity. You trembled bashfully, and you spoke with a country brogue.

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Kaede. I didn't know about anything and was forlorn. At that time you said you were a little unwell and sat quietly leaning on the brazier and doing nothing. I thought you were a gentle soul. As I saw more and more of you, I came to know that there was a loneliness and sweetness about you that my other big sisters lacked. And I fell wholly in love with you.

Asaka. At first you had a frightful time, didn't you? Almost more than your little body could stand.

Kaede. You shielded me constantly.

Asaka. How startled I was when you almost killed yourself.

Kaede. You wept and stopped me and said, "Don't give up. I understand everything. I also suffer the same thoughts. It's all for your mother at home."

Asaka. And you understood well. Since then we've wept together as we've talked over our mutual lot.

Kaede. We've strung out our mutual misfortunes just as if we'd count them.

Asaka. We wondered together why we were unfortunate like this. And then, unable to figure it out, we finally decided there was nothing to do but be resigned and gave it up.

Kaede. Since then our intimacy's increased.

Asaka. Telling each other everything.

Kaede (*looking into Asaka's face*). You mustn't desert me.

Asaka. Indeed, you mustn't desert me.

Kaede. Big sister, give me your hand.

Asaka. Yes. (*Reaches out her hand.*)

Kaede (*pressing ASAKA's hand to her breast*). My, how cold it is!

Asaka. I'm thin-blooded.

(*The two are silent for a little.*)

Kaede. Do you hear from Zenran Sama?

Asaka. Yes, sometimes.

Kaede. What's he doing at home?

Asaka. He's sitting in a temple as usual. He says in his letters that he worships Buddha conventionally, but since he's not able at all to really believe, his heart's simply growing more and more forlorn.

Kaede. He's the most lonely man in the world, isn't he? The more I saw of him, the more I was made to feel how great was the burden of unhappiness he bore away down in his heart.

Asaka. He really came up to Kyōto because he wanted to meet his father. But considering many things, such as his father's welfare, and the feelings of the disciples and his relatives, he finally decided not to go to him.

Kaede. Then he must have gone back home with a lonely heart, didn't he?

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Asaka. It was more pitiful than lonely. (*Pauses.*) But thanks to Yuien Sama, he learned his father's feelings well and was greatly relieved. He said, "Separated, we'll pray for each other's happiness; it's the common duty of man to make all men his neighbors and pray thus. No matter how much people may love each other, they can't be together always. They can't do other than live apart and commune in prayer. It's the same with us; we must soon part. When we'll be able to meet again, I don't know. Though we part, please pray for me. I, too, will pray for you."

Kaede. Zenran Sama liked Yuien Sama very much, didn't he?

Asaka. He called him the warmest and purest of men and was always praising him.

Kaede. And Yuien Sama said he couldn't see why everybody spoke ill of Zenran Sama.

Asaka. He's out of tune because his good heart's been bruised. If the heart once goes wrong, it can never get back to its original nature again, you see. To bring it back, warming and moistening love must ever be near that devastated heart. Yet his surroundings not only are loveless but overflow with curses and contempt.

Kaede. And he's not a man who can ignore the condemnation of others. Though he says things that seem strong. Once he asked me seriously

whether I thought him a good or a bad man, and when I answered that I'd never known a man with so good a heart, he asked if I really thought that; so I said I wouldn't flatter him and he grew tearful. "Kaede," he said, "I'm really a good man; don't think me a scoundrel such as everybody in his abuse makes me out to be." It was the night of the very day he forced me to drink *saké* in the parlor and acted badly.

Asaka. He's a man whose depth becomes more evident the longer one knows him. I've never seen another guest of his worth.

Kaede. What sort of relation is there between you and Zenran Sama anyway. Even now I don't know well.

Asaka (*laughing dismally*). It's different from that between you and Yuien Sama. We're both old.

Kaede. But you both loved each other, didn't you?

Asaka. We did, indeed.

Kaede. Then why did you part like that?

Asaka. That's the loneliness of life. We've both grown into the lonely dispositions that can do like that. Though you can't understand now.

Kaede. Can't I? But you're always thinking of him, aren't you?

Asaka. Of course I am.

Kaede. When'll he come to Kyōto next?

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Asaka. I don't know.

Kaede. You must be lonely.

Asaka (tearfully). I'm used to that loneliness.

Kaede. I somehow feel forlorn.

(Enter the Waitress.)

Waitress. Kaede San. Money; come quick, as you are.

Kaede. Ah, I hate it. I don't want to go to-night. I don't feel like the parlor.

Asaka. Still, put up with it and go. After what's just happened, if you didn't go, mother'd be terrible.

Kaede. There's no way out of it. *(Sits down before the mirror-stand, touches up her face a little and directly stands up.)* Then excuse me.

Asaka (going back to the brazier). Hurry back. *(KAEDE goes out. ASAKA is still for a moment. She levels off the ashes with the tongs.)* Ah, the fire seems to have gone out before I was aware. *(Sighs.)* My heart's just like these ashes. My youthful passion's gone. I can't possibly love as Kaede does. Even my tears for my own unhappiness have begun to dry up. The heart to complain, too, is gradually dying out. I hope for nothing. Still I can't die. I simply keep on with things mechanically and without interest. What's left, what? Only a heart to endure pain, old age and death, and after that,—ah, I know nothing! It's too dismal. *(Falls forward and weeps, then after*

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a little, lifts her face and looks about hazily.) There must be somebody who can help me, really somebody—

(Curtain.)

ACT V—SCENE I

PERSONS IN THE SCENE

YUIEN.

Six Priests.

An Acolyte.

(The main hall. A vast room full of great round pillars. Back center, an altar. To right and left, sliding doors designed in antique elegance. Candle offerings blaze in the light-dishes. A surrounding passage. It connects with the living quarters and the holy of holies. Hanging in the side gallery, a bell. It is an evening late in spring one month after the events in Act IV. Six Priests sit before the altar chanting a vesper service sūtra. They are nearly done.)

Priests (chanting together). Shaka Muni Butsu nō i jinnan keu shi ji. Nō o shaba kokudo gojoku akuse, kōjoku kenjoku bonnōjoku shujōjoku myōjoku chū toku anokutara-sanmyaku-sanbodai. I sho shujō setsu ze issai seken nanshin shi hō. Sharihotsu. Tōchi ga o gojoku akuse gyō shi nanji toku anokutara-sanmyaku-sanbodai i issai seken setsu shi nanshin shi hō ze i jinnan Butsu setsu shi kyō i. Sharihotsu kyū sho biku issai seken tennin ashura tō mon Butsu

shosetsu kanki shinju sarai ni ko. (*Bell.*) Bussetsu Amida Kyō. (*Bell.*)*

First Priest. Namu Amida Butsu.

Priests (together). Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu.

(They repeat this invocation several times, then all bow in adoration and become silent. Standing up, they go in silence to right and left, open the sliding

*This is the end of the sutra called the Amida Kyō. For the purposes of the play, it is more effective in the Japanese than in English. Abounding in sinico-Japanese derived from the ancient kingdom of Wu and in religious terms borrowed from the Sanscrit, it is not, when recited, wholly intelligible to the average Japanese layman. It may be rendered into English as follows:

Gakya Muni, the Buddha, accomplished the most difficult and rare thing. In this world, in this evil life of the five impurities—the impurity of time-disintegration, the impurity of self-discrimination, the impurity of the passions, the impurity of life-degeneration and the impurity of slaughter for self-preservation—he attained enlightenment. For the sake of all living creatures, he preached this doctrine, hard of belief to all the people in the world. Sharihotsu. You surely know that I, in this world of the five impurities, did this difficult thing and reached enlightenment, and for the sake of all the world, I preach this law most difficult to believe. Since it is very hard to understand, I deliver this sutra. Sharihotsu and all the brethren, all the people in the world, the angels and the demons heard what the Buddha taught, and they were filled with joy and believed and, bowing low, they retired. (*Bell.*) The Amida Sutra, the teaching of Buddha. (*Bell.*)

G.W.S.

doors and go out. The stage is deserted for a moment.
"Enter an Acolyte. He rings the evening bell. This takes two minutes. He goes out without a word.
Enter YUIEN, pale and with bloodshot eyes.)

Yuien. The service seems to be over. (*Sighs. The clear sound of wooden clappers is heard.*) Ah. (*Listens.*) The clappers are being struck for supper in the living quarters. (*Falls down before the altar.*) Ah, peace has fled from my soul. Quiet,—that calm and harmonious soul of mine, where can it have fled? How peaceful it was as I knelt before this sutra-stand alone in this hall and offered up my prayer each evening! What can have happened to my spirit, which was softly fragrant as the smoke of incense rising from that censer? I protected that quiet as if folding it in my narrow bosom with my arms. (*Pauses.*) Of late, how foolish I've been; my heart's always stirred up and hungry. How many sleepless nights I've passed! With my soul in disorder, I'm tending to neglect even the morning and evening services. My soul's in restless confusion just like a stray dog. Yes, to-day the mistress at the Matsunoya tauntingly called me a stray dog. (*Trembles.*) She said that a hungry-faced man who feared the eyes of others and would come sneaking in at the back entrance was like a homeless dog. Oh, I was standing timidly at the back door dressed in this black robe and all red in the face. Though insulted, not

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able to say a word. My miserable form must have looked even like a dog's. Even like a begging dog's. (*Weeps.*)

(*Enter three Priests. YUIEN hides his tears, rises and makes as if to go.*)

First Priest. Yuien Dono.

Yuien. Yes. (*Stands still.*)

First Priest. I want to talk to you a moment. Please wait.

Second Priest. We've been waiting for you to come.

Third Priest. Just sit down.

(*The three Priests sit down.*)

Yuien (sitting down in fear). Have you some business with me? You're so formal.

First Priest. In truth there's a matter about which we would inquire. (*Looks at YUIEN's face.*) What's wrong with you? Your color's terrible.

Second Priest. Your eyes are bloodshot. (*YUIEN sits dumb.*)

Third Priest. Where've you been to-day?

Yuien. To Kiya Machi. It took me long.

First Priest. Where in Kiya Machi? (*YUIEN does not answer.*)

Second Priest. You've neglected the temple services repeatedly.

Yuien. I'm sorry. (*Tears come into his eyes.*)

Third Priest. You must take care.

First Priest. Though you're still young—

Second Priest. No, especially when young, one should be full of devotion. When young, we studied with all our might. Getting up before sunrise in the morning, we sat in quiet meditation and strengthened our souls till breakfast. At night we studied the sutras till late, and sometimes we didn't know when the moon hung in the daybreak sky. We never thought of such a thing as neglecting the services.

Third Priest. Because, anyhow, we had different aims than the young disciples of this day. It's truly matter for regret that this habit of negligence has grown up in this way. That one who wears the black garb should think of a woman,—ah, there I've said it at last.

First Priest. Nay, we must say what should be said. Though we've been silent till to-day, it's no good for Yuien Dono if we let the matter go indefinitely. First of all it's a pollution of the law. (*Speaks more intently.*) Yuien Dono, to-day you were at the Matsunoya in Kiya Machi, weren't you?

Second Priest. And with a harlot called Kaede or some such name. (*YUIEN preserves silence.*)

Third Priest. We know everything. All your frequent leaves when you said you were going to visit the Rokkakudō or the grave at Kurodani were for the purpose of meeting that woman secretly, weren't they?

Yuien. I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

Second Priest. I've long thought that your manner was strange. Nay, now there's not a disciple who's not aware of it. Whenever there are three together, they whisper about you.

Third Priest. The younger disciples are envious of you, you see. Though we old men don't mind. As I passed through the waiting room the other day, I overheard them saying that Yuien Dono was a lucky man, being (*with peculiar emphasis*) the favorite disciple of the superior and the beloved of a beautiful woman.

Second Priest (chaffingly). They say behind your back that you're the major general in black.

Yuien (biting his lip). Are you making game of me?

Second Priest. No, people say that. (*Becomes serious.*) If the superior says nothing, you must restrain yourself the more, I think. It's not right to take advantage of his gentleness and do as you like.

Third Priest. If it were a gentlewoman, it might not be so bad; but that you should concern yourself with a low-down harlot! A priest! It's shameful.

Yuien. Though she's a harlot, she's a pure-hearted woman.

Second Priest (exchanging glances with Third Priest). You're deceived! The proverb says there's no truth in a courtesan. What a harlot says is not to be relied upon.

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Yuien. But she, just she, is not such a woman. I rather fear lest I may harm her.

Third Priest. What! You're still young, aren't you? Nothing's so easy as to deceive you. She has only to put a hand on your knee and let fall a tear,—that's all.

Yuien. I believe in her.

Second Priest. What though she should really feel some interest in you? I should say it would be but curiosity. In a young priest, you see. For you're good looking, you know.

Yuien. It's no such light thing. We're bitterly in earnest. Every time we meet, we cry. When we two are together, the tears come naturally.

Third Priest. I'm surprised to hear that you're in earnest. That you're sincere in whoring. A priest! Nay, but I'm completely astonished, at the young priests of this day.

Yuien. I don't treat her as a harlot. I treat her as a maiden. Nor does she think of herself as being purchased by me.

Second Priest. If she's a maiden, she must be a very whimsical sort. A Chinese book says, "She sees off the guest from Wu in the morning, in the evening welcomes the guest from Yueh." Think! She has scores of other guests. Among them there are doubtless men richer than you—distinguished and great merchant princes and warriors. For her

to pass over these men and give her heart especially to you, you must have something to attract her. But, though it's rude to say so, you're still a young probationer and have no money. On the whole, there's no quality in priests to make women love them. Eh. Suppose you think it over. Men are self-conceited when it comes to women, you know. Don't take it in bad part. You're much excited. But even as we talk like this, that woman may be in the embrace of another man.

Yuien. Ah! That I should have that said to me! (*Excitedly.*) I know very well that I'm worthless. Moreover, I know perfectly that her body's contaminated. But I can't doubt that her heart's truly mine.

Third Priest. And your heart's also hers, I dare say. (*With a smile on his lips.*) Tens of millions of young men have said the same thing through the ages. And when they had repented, it was already all over with them. So the superior man avoids danger from the outset. A man of wisdom enjoys the charms of women within a limited circle in which his bodily safety is secure. In your case, you're about to plunge bodily into the danger. Without armor. Shall I call it foolish? Or childish? Anyhow, playing with women's more dangerous than playing with fire!

Yuien. But aren't all things dangerous that are

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done in real earnest? The superior has said that truth is gained only when one meets with experiences in the flesh. He's even said that faith itself may be called one kind of adventure.

Third Priest. For shame, Yuién Dono! (*Assumes a harsh tone.*) Do you think whoring and faith all one?

Second Priest. It's impudent to try to cover your misconduct with the name of the superior. Really, the superior overestimates you. You've been spoiled by his love.

Third Priest. You're infatuated with a woman whose antecedents aren't known and neglect your service to Buddha; moreover, with this and that, you craftily defend yourself. To tell the truth, you ought simply to confess your fault and apologize. When we were young, anybody guilty of such conduct would have been considered a stain on the temple and straightway driven out.

Second Priest. Isn't it absurd to believe the words of a low-down harlot? There's a limit even to foolishness. Don't you just about understand? There, the people commonly say "turning the other way and sticking out the tongue," though such words are not too elegant.

Yuién (getting angry). You despise the heart of a girl too much. Moreover, isn't it too great a generalization to think a man noble because he's a priest

and a woman ignoble because she's a harlot? There's impurity even in the heart of a priest. There's purity even in the heart of a harlot. She can love purely. It's not right, I think, to suspect a person of being bad from the first, when you don't know what sort she is. A man becomes serious when he gives all his mind to one thing. I've just heard what you had to say, and I've felt that you have no sober ideas about women. Isn't it that sort of thinking that's made woman evil.

Third Priest. Do you mean to preach to us?
(*Smiles cynically.*)

Yuien (beside himself). You don't love me. From the first I've felt just as if my heart was stiff from contact with a chilly atmosphere. You don't love me. (*With tears in his eyes.*) A moment ago, when you used the words "sticking out the tongue," a mean expression came about your mouth. When she said she was unclean and, with tears in her eyes and her hands clasped, confessed her shame and apologized, she made me feel her saintliness. To speak truth, she's recently become a pious woman. Sometimes I even think I'm blessed when bathed in the light of her pure religious feelings.

Second Priest. You'd better worship her instead of Buddha.

Yuien (standing up). I'll take my leave. (*Starts to go.*)

Third Priest (shouting). Do as you like.

First Priest (checking him). Don't be rough.
Yuien Dono, just wait a moment, please.

Yuien (sitting down). I'm wretched. (*Tears come to his eyes.*)

First Priest. Don't you think that what you're doing is wrong?

Yuien. I don't think it's so bad as you say.

First Priest. Then why do you lie and go out?
(*YUIEN makes no answer.*) After all there's something wrong. Though, since you're young, it's not unnatural, I think. And I don't speak severely. But you'd better consider a little. For it affects the deportment of the other young disciples.

Yuien. It's been very wrong of me to tell lies and go out. It's been wrong of me not to confess frankly to the superior. My heart's always accused me.

First Priest. Did you say to confess frankly to the superior?

Yuien. Yes. Without the least concealment.

First Priest. You have grand ideas, don't you?

Second Priest. There's a limit even to audaciousness.

Third Priest. There's no telling how angry he'd be.

Yuien. But the superior hasn't said that we mustn't love.

Second Priest. It's surely not likely he told you to love a harlot.

Yuien. But he said it was wrong to despise one because she is a harlot.

First Priest. Though our sect doesn't hate marriage, that refers to men and women who marry in the proper way. Not illicit intercourse between the sexes. Especially, you must know, I think, whether it's good or bad to dally in secret with a harlot.

Yuien. It was quite wrong for me to go to her secretly. I acknowledge it. I won't offend again. Please forgive me. These days, I'm always thinking. But I'm always in doubt about what relations between men and women are the truest. Sometimes I even wonder if the illicit sort may not really be the truest.

Second Priest. I'm surprised at you.

Yuien. I mean to marry her.

Third Priest. That harlot?

Yuien. Yes, we've exchanged fast vows.

Second Priest. I'm astonished that you should say such a thing soberly.

First Priest. Have you considered well?

Yuien. Yes, so well that I haven't been able to sleep nights.

Second Priest. And you say the result is your arrival at this decision, do you? At this sensual decision? I'm surprised. I'm ashamed. Aren't you bewitched by something?

Third Priest. It's apostasy. It's dreadful. (*Pauses.*)

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This is surely the temptation of the devil. (YUIEN sighs.)

First Priest. Yuien Dono, I'll not go on repeating forever. For I know your undeviating character. I believe I've always loved you. I'll speak just once more. Please think. Calmly and composedly. You're excited. Since love blinds even the eyes of wise men, I can't but think for the temple and the law. Besides, I must take into consideration hundreds of young disciples. That flock of sheep easily lead astray. I understand the heart of youth. I don't think it unnatural that you should find women lovely. For that matter, there would be no trouble about your making a suitable maiden of good family your wife, for fortunately this sect doesn't condemn matrimony. I have in mind a suitable person. But it's outside all reason to marry a harlot of unknown antecedents. In these days the public's clamorously condemning the doctrine of resignation of our sect, saying that it tolerates evil conduct. If at such a time the young disciple who waits upon the superior should marry a harlot, it would become a pretext for an attack upon us by the enemies of Buddha. The devotion of the young disciples would be dulled. Usually you're quick. You must see the reason in this. If you don't change your mind, I won't have you in this temple. Or else, I shall leave myself. But probably you'll give up your idea and not occa-

sion me that pain. I'm convinced I love you. You see, don't you? Yuien Dono, no doubt you're excited now. You'll probably decide to give her up. Please give her up altogether and—hello, you're crying.

Second Priest. You're not a woman, are you?

Third Priest. No. He must have given her up. So he may feel bad.

Yuien. I can't give her up. I've already thought it all out. I've considered the temple, the law and the other disciples. But I can't desert her. She's without guilt. I can find no reason for deserting her. I can't possibly think that love's bad. If it's bad, why do tears and thankfulness go along with its emotions? My heart of love for her is filled with sincerity. Love flows shining through my breast. Warm gladness drenches all my body. I feel that now, indeed, I live. Ah, if you only knew how truly we love each other! I want to live cherishing the longing that gushes forth from my heart. So long as that desire isn't bad, I feel I can't possibly give it up. The superior has taught me. Religion is the determination in a man to preserve unto the grave those hopes which mortals may entertain and to bring them to perfection in the land beyond the tomb. That poor little girl! She's fallen to the bottom of a pit and is struggling there in the slime. She's given herself up for dead. Now the rope of her salvation

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comes down to her. If she seizes it, she's saved. But she's so surrendered herself to unhappiness that she refuses it at first. How I've worked to arouse in her the desire to be saved! At last she's grasped the rope. She's been pulled up to the bright brink of the land. Now happiness and hope are before her eyes. Now, suddenly to cut the rope asunder—oh! Could I do such a cruel thing? Could such a thing be pleasing to the heart of Buddha? It's unthinkable. I can't do it. (*Feverishly.*) I want to live with her. Always, forever.

Second Priest. Don't you care what becomes of the temple? Don't you care what becomes of the law?

Third Priest. Or though the young disciples stumble?

Yuien. Ah, when it comes to that, I don't know. (*Writhes.*)

Second Priest. You must choose between the two. Is it love, or is it the law?

Yuien. That's chaotic. It's positively irrational. It's unreasonable to say that one can't abide by the law except he cast away love. Unless one have both—

Third Priest. What impertinence!

Second Priest. Do you think to serve both the harlot and Buddha? I've heard enough. For shame!

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First Priest (quietly). You mustn't be so violent. Calm yourselves. Yuien Dono. You must be distressed. But this pain's temporary. As the days go by, it'll become milder before you realize it. Man's heart's not so narrow as to be inflamed by but a single object. The butterfly doesn't light upon just one violet. Now you feel that this matter's important above all things. That's natural. But to the eyes of us old men, it's no more than the same old story of any Tarō finding out his Ohana.

Yuien (angered). I'd be ashamed to think such a thing.

First Priest. You'd better not get excited like that. As an old man speaking to a young man like you, I, well, I only said that it was that sort of thing. There's no use arguing with you further. There's nothing for us to do but carry out our intention. But I ask you just once more. Do you positively refuse to give up that harlot?

Yuien. Positively.

First Priest. Then it can't be helped. (*To the other two.*) Since it's useless to talk further, let's go. (*Gets up. The other two get up. The three make to go.*)

Yuien (grasping the robe of the First Priest). What will you do?

First Priest. I can't stay in the same temple with you. I'll ask the superior to decide which of us must go.

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Yuien. That's too much. Just wait a minute.

First Priest. I've said all I had to say. (*Pulls his robe away.*) There's nothing else to do.

(*The three Priests go off.*)

Yuien (*looks after them vacantly and sighs*). What shall I do? I didn't think love was such a painful thing. This anxiety's practically without end, and I feel heavy in spirit as if my soul were under a burden. (*Pauses.*) But the profound joy that wells up out of the midst of that anxiety! That quivering, tear-engendering, death-inviting gladness! (*Madly.*) Kaede San, Kaede San, Kaede San! (*Looks about him as if startled by his own voice. Becomes thoughtful.*) But can it be that I'm mistaken? May I not be in the grip of some invisible power? (*Looks at the altar.*) The flickering flame of that candle seems to be whispering something to my heart. That compassionate face probably sees my misery and wretchedness. I know nothing. Whether I'm doing right or wrong, what may become of me,—and to think how strictly I've judged others heretofore. Without so much as knowing how weak and miserable I was myself. Though a moment ago I spoke so positively, I somehow feel like a man whose every act's unforgivable. Oh, compassionate Buddha, (*folding his hands in supplication*) forgive me, I beseech thee!

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE II

PERSONS IN THE SCENE

SHINRAN.

YUIEN.

The Three Priests.

(SHINRAN SHŌNIN'S room. The stage is the same as in Act III, Scene II. It is the night of the same day. The three Priests are talking to SHINRAN.)

Shinran I was somewhat aware of it myself. But I was watching in silence. For in such a case it's not well for others to make too much of a fuss.

First Priest. We've thought the same and shut our eyes to it up to to-day. And we've put down the excitement among the young disciples. We thought that before long Yuien Dono would take thought for his own conduct, but it simply grows worse and worse.

Second Priest. Daily his waywardness grows upon him. He makes some excuse and goes out. And he comes back late and tends to neglect the services.

Third Priest. He's always sighing and coming into the reception room with eyes swollen with weeping and moping about the living quarters, so that the other disciples, finding it too much for their eyes, are talking busily.

First Priest. A man who had seen Yuien Dono loafing around the back of a tea-house in Kiya Machi came and told us. He says he was confused and made an agitated and ignoble figure. The tea-house is angry because he goes and takes his pleasure stealthily without paying. It's become impossible for me to control the young disciples.

Second Priest. They say the girl's a young seventeen-year-old harlot named Kaede or something at the tea-house called the Matsunoya. It seems to have been going on since the autumn of last year. It appears that Yuien Dono often went secretly to see Zenran Sama there when he was in Kyōto. He met her then, it seems. Anyway, it's a troublesome matter.

Third Priest. To-day again he came back late after the service was over. When we went into the main hall, he was crouching before the altar crying. His face was pale, his eyes were wild and he presented an extraordinary appearance. We thought it would not be for his good to let him go on thus forever, so we admonished him kindly.

First Priest. We counseled him earnestly, explaining the good of the temple and the good of the law. But he wouldn't listen.

Second Priest. He doesn't seem to think his own conduct very bad. He said so himself.

Third Priest. What can he mean? He says he's

plighted marriage vows with that harlot. And he praised her to our faces.

First Priest. With kindness I pointed out to him the right and wrong of things and begged him to give her up for the sake of the law. But he said positively that he never could.

Second Priest. Finally he said it was false to say that one could not follow both the law and love together. He forgot himself and became like one insane.

Third Priest. Not only would he not listen to our admonitions, but he turned on us and had the effrontery to try to preach us a sermon.

Second Priest. Anyway I was surprised. I was dumfounded and ashamed. Even the long-suffering Eiren Dono finally got angry and said he couldn't remain in the same temple with Yuien Dono.

First Priest. I can't bear the shame of being in the same temple with Yuien Dono. Either he goes or I go. I've come here to ask you to decide.

(SHINRAN sits buried in thought.)

Second Priest. The aged Eiren Dono can't go out from this familiar temple in which he's lived so long.

Third Priest. If you leave us now, who'll manage the young disciples? Besides, you of distinguished services—

First Priest. Nay. Though I stay on in the temple, with things as they are, I have no power to control the young disciples.

Second Priest. Nay. If you go, we'll be in great trouble. (*To SHINRAN.*) Master, so speaks Eiren Dono. There's nothing to do now but to ask your decision. (*The three Priests watch SHINRAN closely.*)

Shinran. I'm at fault. (*Pauses.*) That's all I clearly understand and can say fearlessly. As for other things, I can't judge clearly whether they're good or bad. Though I seem to understand a little, when I think deeply I lose my way entirely. I haven't the confidence to sit in judgment on Yuien's sin. It seems to me wrong, but I can't help feeling it's not unnatural. (*Thinks and thinks as he talks.*) I have a deep and hidden responsibility for things turning out this way. All along as I've heard you complaining of Yuien, I've felt as if my sin were being condemned. In the first place, I have no positive convictions even on the subject of the relations between men and women. It was the autumn of last year. Yuien asked me earnestly about love. He asked such things as whether it's all right to love. I simply told him that I couldn't say whether it was right or wrong, but if he did love, to love seriously and with all his heart. When I saw his evident loneliness, I judged from my own feelings in the days of my youth and felt that I just about understood his. I felt that they could never be quelled by the advice not to love at all. At that time I did say that love was bound up with sin. But what effect could that

have on Yuien's lonely and starving heart? He surely felt as if oil had been poured on the flames of his yearning. His loneliness became fiercer and fiercer, and then Zenran set out a gay feast for his eyes. The luring passion of beautiful women appeared. He yielded himself to that unconsciously. Having once given himself up, he can't stop short of the limit. He surely recalled my words, "Love with all your heart." Oh, I'm a sort of abettor. And (*painfully*) Zenran's heedless invitation that took no thought for the fate of an innocent, I can't think a matter that doesn't concern me. I must at all events share Yuien's sin with him. How can such a man as I judge him?

First Priest. What you say seems right, but you think too sensitively. You only went so far as to fail to forbid him to love. You didn't say to love; above all, you didn't say to dally secretly with a harlot. He interpreted your words selfishly according to his own convenience. I say nothing about Zenran Sama's part. You had nothing to do with that. Yuien Dono went to him without your knowledge.

Shinran. I can't think that's all.

Second Priest. If you look at it the way you say, you make yourself to blame for everything.

Shinran. You are to blame for practically everything, if you look into it carefully. There are saints

who say, "If there's a single sinner in the world, the responsibility's all mine." By "saint" is meant a man whose conviction of sin is deeper than that of ordinary men. (*Pauses.*) I did wrong; as for Zenran, he's clearly bad. Truly his is an unfortunate nature so made that it must wound others.

Third Priest. Then it sounds as if Yuien Dono is sinless.

Shinran. Yuien, too, is bad. If you look at us on the side of badness, we're all bad. If on the side of reasonableness, everybody's reasonable. It's all the work of demons. There's some excuse for the worst of sins. For all sins of whatever kind are caused by the demon called karma. If you look at it in that way, we're not responsible. But we mustn't make excuses. All things that afflict ourselves and others are bad. Yuien, too, is certainly bad. He's upset the tranquillity of his surroundings. He's broken the repose of his own soul.

First Priest. Truly that's bad. That he should wound the heart of the superior from whom he's received such favors is alone unpardonable. Our worry, the young disciples' excitement,—he's destroyed the peace and authority of the temple. As I see it, the whole trouble has its source in Yuien Dono alone. Wherefore with his care alone, the peace and order of the temple can be restored. And I think it his duty to bring this about. Nevertheless

he doesn't profit by our most reasonable advice. He's declared that he doesn't intend to correct his present conduct. Isn't that unreasonable? And to make it worse, he spoke in disparaging terms of us his elders. When Zenran Sama came to Kyōto, I thinking that a slip would never do, warned him I don't know how many times. He despises me. Up to this time I've had charge of many disciples, but I've never seen one like him before.

(SHINRAN *sits in silent thought.*)

Second Priest. Nay, his attitude was arrogant and disrespectful to his elders. So I think Eiren Dono's anger was by no means unreasonable.

Third Priest. I thought his hiding in the sleeve of the superior and concealing his own sin the worst of all.

Shinran. He's always been gentle by nature.

Second Priest. That gentleness is suspicious. Little demons sometimes have beautiful faces. Though I hate to say it, don't you place too much faith in Yuien Dono? (*Hesitatingly.*) There are other disciples, too, who think you favor him too much.

Shinran. But everybody makes mistakes.

First Priest (grumblingly). But those mistakes should be repented of and corrected. Not only does Yuien Dono not repent of his mistakes, but he goes on repeating them, does it consciously, and proclaims it. It's simply more than I can bear. Up to this

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day I've worked long for the good of the temple. Happily our sect has come into to-day's prosperity. But the authority of the law has begun to decline. It's a grievous matter. I've lost my power to control the disciples. I'm ashamed to live in the same temple with Yuien Dono. If he's to stay, I ask leave to go. (*Tears stand in his eyes.*)

Shinran (*looking at the First Priest compassionately*). You mustn't leave the temple. I know well how you've worked for it. You've shared its joys and sorrows with me up to this day. And hereafter please help me until the end.

First Priest. I want to stay in the temple forever.

Second Priest. Then Yuien Dono goes, doesn't he?

Third Priest. Isn't that a matter of course?

Shinran. I can't put Yuien out either. (*The three Priests look at Shinran.*) What you say is, in short, that Yuien being an evil man, I should expel him out of the temple. I think that if he's evil, there's the more reason for not expelling him. If we cast Yuien, who's bad even in the midst of our love and protection, out among the indifferent people of the world, what'll become of him? Won't he simply get worse and worse? Won't he injure the people of the world? His badness goes without saying. Where's the man who isn't bad? We're all bad. Other reasons may be valid, but his badness is no reason. Anyway, in this temple. There ought to be nothing

but bad men in this temple. Isn't that the difference between this temple and others. The compassion of Buddha falls on the heads of us sinners like rain. You ought all to know this well. You know it so well you forget. Don't you? Eiren, do you remember how you and I first started this temple?

First Priest. I remember well.

Shinran. I can't forget that time. Our breasts thrilled with the joy of organizers. Thanks to you, we gathered alms from priests and laymen. And it was you who chose this site.

First Priest. How delighted we were the day we raised the ridgepole!

Shinran. That day you and I kneeled down before the Buddha and adopted five fundamental principles. What was the first of them?

First Priest. It was, "We are bad men."

Shinran. Exactly. And the second?

First Priest. "We'll judge no other man."

Shinran. Please settle this affair, too, by those principles. It's utterly impossible to determine what's good and what's bad. That's first to be understood through the wisdom of Buddha. I have absolutely no knowledge of the two words "good" and "bad." If Yuien's wrong, Buddha will probably judge him. (*The First Priest sits hanging his head in silence.*)

Second Priest. But this is too much.

Shinran. We must forgive without judging. Just

as we're forgiven by Buddha, you see. We must forgive, no matter what evil's done us. What though a devil should come and torment your child to death before your eyes, you'd have to forgive that devil. If you cursed him, you'd sin. The price of sin is death. If you commit the smallest sin, your soul must fall into Hell. The terrible thing about wronging another is that oftener than not the wronged is also drawn into the judgment. Didn't you curse Yuien? Was your soul free from sin? Forgive him, forgive him.

Third Priest. Under such circumstances, could we keep our tempers absolutely? In the face of that arrogance, that willfulness and that indignity—

Shinran. That's not unreasonable. But it's not good. No matter what the circumstances, you mustn't get angry. You should really have forgiven him without the least show of anger. But who can do that? Don't, oh, don't give yourselves up to anger. If you're careless with fire, it quickly spreads. Shut your eyes. Shut your eyes. Don't judge your antagonist. And simply pray, "Namu Amida Butsu."

Second Priest. That's a very hard thing.

Shinran. It's hard, but it's the noblest thing. And the wisest. "Namu Amida Butsu" suffices for everything. (*He puts his hands together to show them.*)

First Priest. I was wrong after all. No matter

what Yuien Dono did, it was my place to forgive him. No matter how painful it might be. Before I knew it, the horns of my selfishness had sprouted.

Shinran. Forgive him.

First Priest. I do. (*Tears come into his eyes.*)

Second Priest. I say nothing more.

Third Priest. I, too, forgive him.

Shinran. It relieves me to hear you say so. We ought all to forgive each other and live intimately together. All men are unhappy, you see. For they're all bound for the grave. We must so live that we'll never have to exclaim in regret, "Would that I had forgiven him then!" Devils are bad, I tell you. Men are all sons of Buddha. Finding flaws in the children of Buddha, they breathe into them the spirit of execration. Against that, nothing avails but forgiveness. There's no limit to judgment. We must pray. The peace of the heart comes first.

First Priest. Really that's true. After one's been reviling, his heart's lonely. My present heart of forgiveness makes me feel victorious as my angered heart didn't.

Shinran. Most true. Most true. If there's a vision of the Pure Land in a man's heart, that's exactly the appearance of the heart when it has forgiven.

Second Priest. Then what do you intend to do with Yuien Dono?

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Shinran. I'll admonish him well. But since you're reconciled now, I'll tell you that I find something narrow in your thoughts. For instance, have you thought of the destiny of this harlot called Kaede? It's not right simply to call her a low woman and cast her out. Isn't she the most unfortunate of those involved in this affair? Once when Hōnen Sama stopped over night at Muro, a harlot came and asked about the Way. Then how kindly he explained the law to her! She wept and went away happy. And one of the disciples of Oshaka Sama was loved by a harlot. Then, it's related Oshaka Sama made her into a nun. Buddhist affinity is a mysterious thing. You must consider the welfare of that harlot, too. You must pray for the lots of Yuien and the harlot. Let's all pray and think hard. Won't you? Here I speak only of what concerns you. For Yuièn, I'll admonish him well. Now won't you please go out and send Yuien to me.

First Priest. Certainly. We'll call him at once.

Second Priest. We must pray and think hard.

Third Priest. Then we'll go. I'm sorry we've troubled you.

Shinran. Not at all. I'm delighted that you've understood me perfectly. (*The three Priests go out.* SHINRAN sighs.) Poor disciples! Each has his own sorrows to bear. I pity them every one. (*Pauses.*) Now Yuien is treading the way I followed. With

dubious steps. Sighing. (*Pauses.*) I want to lengthen out his dream. But in the end, he must awake. (*Goes out on the veranda. Looks at the cherry flowers blossoming in heavy abundance.*) They're out beautifully! (*Pauses. A frog croaks quietly in the distance. SHINRAN thinks.*) Truly this is an old, old story. (*Loses himself in reverie. Enter YUIEN. When he sees SHINRAN, he falls on his knees and weeps. SHINRAN goes to him and pats him on the back.*) Yuien, don't cry. I practically understand. I won't scold you hard. For I know you condemn yourself.

Yuien. I hid it. From time to time I lied to you. What shall I do? Please do anything you like to me. I'm ready to receive any punishment. I deserve it.

Shinran. I have no desire to judge you. I'm raising prayers of intercession to Buddha for you, for your sin.

Yuien. Please condemn me. Please whip me.

Shinran. Buddha forgives you, I think.

Yuien. I'm guilty, I'm guilty.

Shinran. Deepen that feeling of guilt with the feeling of thankfulness.

Yuien. Eiren Sama, a moment ago in the main hall, Eiren Sama (*weeps afresh*) squeezed my hand and begged forgiveness. I couldn't bear it. For I'd hated him.

Shinran. He's an honest and good old man.

Yuien. I feel an indefinable fear. Because through

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me the peace of all of you has been upset. But what a predicament I'm in. I can't bring rest to Eiren Sama's soul. He looked fixedly at me with tears in his eyes. Waiting for my assurance of one important thing. But with my heart craving reconciliation and pardon, I simply returned his grip firmly and said nothing of the important thing. I couldn't.

Shinran. That's a thing that we must all settle by our prayers. Come, you'd best quiet your heart. (*A pause. SHINRAN looks intently at YUIEN.*) You're all worn out.

Yuien. For many nights I haven't been able to sleep. There's always a heavy load on my heart.

Shinran. The heavy load of love. But you must put that heavy load on Buddha, too. You can't settle the course of that love by yourself.

Yuien. Is it possible that this love can't be fulfilled? This sincerity of mine? No, no, I can't think of such a thing. We've vowed time and again that though heaven and earth crumble, our love will never change.

Shinran. Not in a myriad ages. In your condition, where you don't know even the morrow! (*Earnestly.*) Man can't make vows. (*Pointing into the garden.*) Who can promise that these cherry flowers at the height of their glory will not be scattered by a storm to-night? And again, without the consent of Buddha, not one bright petal can fall to the earth. Every

phenomenon arising and decaying in the three worlds is under his control. It's the same with love. Of the countless loves of men and women, only those are fulfilled that he approves. All the rest must drain the cup of disappointed love.

Yuien (trembling). That's too terrible. Then what's to become of my love, I wonder?

Shinran. It may be fulfilled and it may not be fulfilled. Man can't know the future.

Yuien. Is it a thing to be left unfulfilled? I'll forfeit my life.

Shinran. Lovers without number have vowed thus through the ages. And they've raised weak arms against fate. Then they've been cast down on the earth. Many unhappy souls have done likewise and are asleep in their graves.

Yuien. Please help me.

Shinran. I pray for you. That your love may be perfected. More than that's beyond man's province. You simply pray, also. Pray, "If it be our fate, please unite us." Never vow. That's the terrible mistake of violating Buddha's province. But though it's a mistake, it can't escape retribution.

Yuien. If it's not our fate?

Shinran. You can't be joined.

Yuien. I can't think of such a thing. I can't bear it. It seems too unreasonable.

Shinran. If Buddha's wisdom finds it good, it's

reasonable. Created things must find their destiny in the plans of their creator. That's surrender. That's conversion. Doesn't the worker in clay take a clod and make of it earthen images one beautiful and one ugly?

Yuien. Are man's vows and his fate unrelated like total strangers? Nay, are they more often in the cruel relation of despot and victim? Is the wish, "Would that it might be thus," trampled under foot by the doom, "It must be thus?" Every desire, no matter how pure and human?

Shinran. That's where prayer comes in. That which joins inwardly the wish and the decree is prayer. Prayer arouses fate. Or we may say it creates fate. Didn't the supreme prayer of Hōzō Biku change the fate of men condemned to Hell into a sure fate in Paradise? If the prayer, "Oh, Buddha, if it be thy will, join us two together," enters Buddha's ears and moves his heart, that will be your fate. That's called the hearing of prayer. That's its subtle effect.

Yuien (springing up). I'll pray. I'll pray with all my heart. I'll arouse my fate with prayer.

Shinran. In prayer there's a great practical feeling. Nay, the deepest of practical things is prayer. Praying for love is nothing other than loving truly. Now above all else, you must make your prayer holy. In other words, your love must be pure to please the heart of Buddha.

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Yuien. Ah, I wish my love to be holy and pleasing to the heart of Buddha. Master what sort of love is holy?

Shinran. Pure love is the love permitted to the children of Buddha. It's the love that curses absolutely no one. Neither Buddha, in the first place, nor the loved one, nor any other man, nor one's self. (*YUIEN listens with all his strength. From time to time he looks uneasy. SHINRAN speaks gravely.*) There are two ways of not cursing Buddha. One's to vow not at all. The other's to hate not the Buddha though your love be not fulfilled.

Yuien. In the end, it's a matter of leaving all to Buddha, isn't it?

Shinran. Exactly. Not to curse any other man means not to injure others because you love the one. There's this selfishness in love. It's the thing that defiles love most. It's at the bottom of this whole trouble. For the sake of love, you've deceived me and failed in duty toward your elders and friends. There's nothing so prone to exclusiveness as love. And many pairs of lovers try to increase their own intimacy by the exclusion of others. The words "I don't like such people," convey secretly, but all the more strongly, the sense, "I like you." For there's a sweetness in that. But, it's a sin. Think; aren't they trying to make themselves happy by cursing others?

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Yuien. My breast's so full of her that there's no room left for thoughts of anybody else. Moreover, if that weren't true, I wouldn't feel that I was loving.

Shinran. In that lies love's mistake. There's an infinitude of energy in love. It's not a thing of mass that's broken into a hundred parts if one love a hundred men. The love in which you can't love this one because you love that one is not true love. Hōzō Biku's myriad sufferings in water and fire were all because of his love for every single soul in the world. Holy love must deepen through loving others. The loved one sends word, "Please come to me." And you want to fly to her. But to-day your friend lies ill and you must nurse him; then what'll you do? To desert him and fly to an ecstatic meeting is the way of ordinary love. Then if for the sake of nursing that friend, you endure your desire to go, and the loved one who's sent word that she wants to see you says, "Then please don't come but stay and nurse your friend," and, if thinking that by this endurance and sacrifice your love has become nobler, you afterwards, in the affliction of your loneliness, weep and pray for each other, that may be called holy love. Such a failure to meet doesn't weaken love, but rather makes it strong and true. That's happiness.

Yuien. What I've done has been the opposite of holy love. I've injured others for my own happiness.

Shinran. Not to curse oneself means not to break

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the peace of one's soul. That's the worst of things and the most likely to go unnoticed. You can't sleep, can you? Your heart's astray and restless, isn't it? You're thin and pale. That's a chaotic state. Don't you think yourself wretched? (*Looks at YUIEN compassionately.*)

Yuien (*weeping*). Even shamefully wretched. I'm astray like a homeless dog. (*Jeering at himself.*) To-day I was reviled for a thieving cat by the mistress of the Matsunoya. By that old she-devil, not worth so much as my little finger!

Shinran. You ought to be ashamed of using such words. You're completely distracted. Unless you respect yourself and maintain your dignity, your love's not holy. To rend your own body is to be in the Purgatory of Beasts in this life. You, a child of Buddha whose appearance ought naturally to be calm and resigned, are completely crazed.

Yuien. Oh! What shall I do? I seem to be about to lose sight of my own nature. (*Shakes madly.*)

Shinran. Wait, Yuien. The most essential thing remains. You mustn't curse the one you love.

Yuien. Curse that girl? The sweetheart for whom I'd give my life?

Shinran. Yes. Hear me well. Yuien. There lies the distinction between ordinary love and the love called charity. The distinction became evident

to me through my bitter experiences. The true nature of ordinary love can't be seen by you who are now in the very center of love's whirlpool. A curse is bound up in love. It lies in this that the lover is not concerned to make happy the fate of his beloved; nay, rather, at times his selfish passion enters in to make a sacrifice of her. That passion's a ticklish thing closely related to hate. Lovers, while breathing curses on each other, think they're blessing each other. There are those who kill their sweethearts. There are even those who compel them to die with them. They all do these things in the name of love. True love is interested in the fate of the other. Ordinary love doesn't necessarily make the fate of the other happy. Has Kaede made you happy? You're distracted and in anguish. And have you made Kaede happy?

Yuicu (recalling a certain scene). Oh, poor Kaede San!

Shinran. It's rarely that ordinary love doesn't injure the fate of both. That's why love becomes sin. In holy love, you must make the loved one your neighbor and love her with the love called charity. You must pity her compassionately. You must look upon her with eyes like those with which Buddha sees all living things. Not thinking of her as your own, but as a child of Buddha, an utter stranger—

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Yuien (crying out). It's impossible. It's impossible for me.

Shinran. Just so. It's impossible. But you must!

Yuien (feels dizzy). Ah! (*Puts his hand to his brow.*) That we should have to love, injuring each other as we do!

Shinran. That's human love.

Yuien (as if to himself). Ah, what ought I to do?

Shinran (quietly). "Namu Amida Butsu" is your only hope. (*Closes his eyes.*) After all, there's nothing to do but pray, "Oh, Buddha, let me not injure that girl. Through my love of her, let me not harm others. Let me not madden myself."

Yuien (folding his hands). If it's our destiny, grant that we be joined.

Shinran. Oh. Pray like that. And set yourself with all your heart, to make that prayer come true. As far as you can. For the rest, the Buddha will help you. (*YUIEN says nothing. His emotion mounts higher and higher, and he finally breaks down and sobs.*) Leave everything to the all-compassionate Buddha. He knows everything. The pain in your heart, and your grief. (*Prays.*) Oh, Buddha, grant a happy end for the love of these poor little ones!

(*Curtain.*)

ACT VI

PERSONS IN THE ACT

SHINRAN, aged 90.

ZENRAN, now called Jishimbō, aged 47.

YUIEN, aged 40.

SHŌSHIN, formerly called Kaede, aged 31.

TONE, Yuien's daughter, aged 9.

SUMA, Yuien's daughter, aged 7.

SENSHIN, a disciple.

KENCHI, a disciple.

TACHIBANA MOTOKAZU, a warrior.

Two Attendants.

A Court Physician.

Several Palanquin Bearers.

Several Priests.

(The action takes place at the temple of Zempoin. The time is the autumn of the fifteenth year after the events in Act V.)

SCENE I

(The garden in the grounds of Zempoin. A wall at the back and to the right. A side gate at the end of the wall to the right. Beyond the wall the temple buildings are visible. There is a pool in the garden. On its banks, quiet trees; in their shade, a summer-house. A road enters the grounds through

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the first gate, which is invisible, crosses the garden and passes in through the side gate. It is morning. OTONE and OSUMA are bouncing a ball in the summer-house.)

Otone (picking up the ball). It's my turn, Suma Sama. *(Bounces the ball.)*

Otone and Osuma (singing together).

Two balls fall in with each other,
And says one of the balls, says she,
"Oh, sister, elder sister, let's find a job," says she.

Chirp, chirp, the sparrows are singing,
Milady, milady, get up, get up.

The sun's gone down at the temple gate,
To the west I look and lodging there's none,
To the east I look and lodging there's none.

Otone (missing the ball). Oh.

Osuma. There, you've missed. *(Goes to pick up the ball. OTONE quickly picks it up and begins to bounce it.)* It's mine, big sister.

Otone. Wait. It's mine once more. Excuse that one.

Osuma. I won't. I'll bounce it.

Otone. I tell you to wait.

Osuma. I won't. I won't. *(Tears come into her eyes.)*

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Otone (beginning to bounce the ball regardless).

Under a tea tree stood an inn—

Osuma (trying to seize the ball). It's my turn.
It's my turn.

Otone (turning away from her).

Drain off one drink, oh, Choroku San,

Drain off two drinks, oh, Choroku San,

On the third cup—

Osuma (bursting out crying). Big sister. You're mean.

Otone (surprised). Come. I'll give it to you.
Here. (*Offers her the ball.*)

Osuma (shaking it off). I won't. I won't.
(*Wails aloud.*)

(*Enter SHŌSHIN. Her hair is cut tastefully. She comes out of the gate and, seeing the children quarreling, runs to them.*)

Shōshin. What's the matter? Suma Chan.

Osuma (in a tearful voice). Big sister. She's mean. She's mean.

Otone. Well, I said I'd give it to you.

Osuma. When it's my turn, she does all the playing.

Otone. She excused one.

Osuma. I didn't. I didn't.

Shōshin. For goodness' sake, don't quarrel this day.

Otone. Mother, are you crying?

Osuma. Mother, mother. (*Clings to her.*)

Shōshin. The superior's awfully sick. So we're all worried. Really, you don't know anything. (*Tearfully.*) I feel as if the very birds in the sky suppress the sound of their wings and sorrow.

Otone. Mother. Don't cry any more. What shall I do? (*To Osuma.*) Suma Sama, forgive me.

Osuma. We won't quarrel any more, mother.

Shōshin (*embracing the two children*). You must be good friends. Come, go into the house for to-day and play quietly in your room.

Osuma. And you, mother?

Shōshin. I have something I must do for a little. I'll come afterwards.

Otone. Will you?

(*The two little girls go off through the gate.*)

Shōshin. The clouds in the sky seem sad. Like harbingers of a great misfortune about to visit the earth. (*Looking in through the gate.*) A palanquin seems to be coming. Probably the doctor's going home. (*Goes toward the gate. A palanquin comes out. Enter YUIEN following the palanquin. Stands in the gate.*)

Yuien. Please go carefully.

(*Shōshin stands at the gate and bows farewell. A voice saying something is heard from inside the palanquin, and it disappears. Yuien stands in dejected silence.*)

Shōshin. What does the doctor say ?

Yuien (despairingly). Ah. Must humanity lose its greatest man ?

Shōshin. Then, does he say, too, that he can't last—

Yuien (walking in the garden as if he cannot remain still). The diagnosis of the doctor from Tachibana Sama's palace is the same as that of the court physician. They say we must resign ourselves to the fact that this is the end of a life completed.

Shōshin. Is there no way to save him ?

Yuien. That's out of the question. They say it may be to-day or to-morrow.

Shōshin. What ? That can't be. (*With force, as if trying to make herself believe her own words.*) He talks cheerfully.

Yuien. That's the forerunner, they say. Like a light that flames up a little when it's about to go out. They say his pulse stops from time to time. There's no telling which breath will be his last. They say the end always comes like that to all who die of old age without disease, so there's no hope. That his passing may be without regret, let us resign ourselves and earnestly—

Shōshin. Oh, if I could but take his place !

Yuien. I've thought the same a thousand times. But that, too, is impossible. The superior has long since given himself up. He says Buddha has summoned him.

Shōshin. In truth his talk seems to have become especially detailed of late. And he seems to be thinking of the end. Yesterday he asked me to read him that entreaty for rebirth in the highest Paradise.

Yuien. Now it seems there's nothing we can do but pray for an easy passing. (*Thinks.*)

Shōshin. Yuien Sama. I'm always worried.

Yuien. About Zenran Sama?

Shōshin. Yes. (*Tearfully.*) He positively must be with his father when the end comes. If he departs this life with his curse undissolved—

Yuien. I'm troubled about that, too. When he first fell ill, thinking that he couldn't possibly get well this time, the disciples considered together. Chiō Dono advised him to send for Zenran Sama. "I'm not separated from that child because I hate him. So don't trouble me with unprofitable things," he said, and, since everybody saw that he was displeased, nobody has broached the matter since.

Shōshin. But he must see him just this once anyway. There'll be no second,—I can't bear it. How Zenran will grieve afterwards!

Yuien. I've sent a messenger post haste to Inada to tell him to come up to the capital at once. He ought to be here now. I've informed all the chief disciples.

Shōshin. You must tell him at once. If the worst

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should happen, there'd be no second chance. There's nobody else that can do it.

Yuien. Some time this morning I'll beg it with all my soul. For the superior, too, is surely troubled about it in his heart.

Shōshin. Of course he is. I'll go and beg with you. (*Looking off stage.*) See, a palanquin has come.

Yuien. It's probably somebody to ask after his health. We must welcome him. (*YUIEN and SHŌSHIN stand at the gate to receive the visitor. The palanquin comes in followed by two Attendants. It stops.*)

Two Attendants. Our master, Tachibana Motokazu. He has come to see the sick.

Yuien. It's kind of you to come. Many thanks for being so kind as to send your palace doctor yesterday. Please come in. We'll show you the way.

(*YUIEN and SHŌSHIN go in first. The two Attendants go in after the palanquin.*)

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE II

(*The sick-room of SHINRAN SHŌNIN. At the back, an altar. Around the far side of the bed stands an antique and elegant screen with landscapes painted on*

it. Near the head are an arm-rest and a little table; on the table there are two or three volumes of scriptures and picture-books. A tray with a medicine jar, a mug and such things on it. They are covered with a white silken cloth. Everything is elegantly ornamented. The designs on the sliding screens are flowers and birds in soft colors. The surrounding corridor connects with the next room where the night-watch stays. In the garden, autumn plants. Beside a two-leaf screen ornamented with oblong and square poetry papers pasted on in disorderly arrangement, a brazier with an earthenware pot of medicine boiling on it. A metal basin, a water bottle and such things. SHINRAN is as thin as a crane. He wears a sleeping gown of thick white stuff. He raises his body a little and leans on the arm-rest.)

Shinran. Read on.

Shōshin (with a letter in her hand). When we read this, we can understand how Hōnen Shōnin loved his mother, can't we? (*She goes on reading from the letter.*) Though till this morning, she was matchless with beautiful and charmingly tumbled hair and fragrant eyebrows, this evening, with the smoke out in the field, those who were near her suddenly draw away and she lies a lone corpse bleaching. Only, only, in the world we trifle with matters ephemeral as the morning-glory and, as we

speed the setting suns, there is no seed of wisdom in us. We should busy ourselves only in preparations for the next world. This world passes in a dream. It passes whether we will or no, and pain and grief both are empty. Only, in a life of phantasms, last year and this year, yesterday and to-day, this changing world is but a moment's empty dream. In it, there are joy and prosperity. And sadness piled like mountains to the clouds. But on waking, we see no slightest trace of anything left. Ah! What a worthless world! Ah, ye vanities! How wretched!

Shinran. When one gets old as I am, such feelings go through and through him. I feel as if all the different things I've done during ninety years are truly a dream. The pleasures of flower and bird, wind and moon, pilgrimages over snow-covered field roads, the pangs and delights of love, have all gone out like bubbles in the distance. Verily I feel that "pain and grief both are empty." Everything passes away. (*As if to himself.*) It's true, it's past and gone. My human life. The lonely grave awaits me. (*Stopping SHŌSHIN, who opens her mouth to say something.*) Please read on.

Shōshin (reading). The world is but a temporary world. The body is but a temporary body. In this brief interval, we must not through thinking of profitless things and committing sins, be born again in this world of metempsychosis and spite. As I said

before, things take varied forms ; precious, desirable, lovable, pitiful, we think, but these are all in our hearts. Our hearts are utterly formless. But then if we continue to think, we become attached to things ; and since this makes us pass through transmigrations, we must get rid of our hearts utterly. Because the heart turns into a demon and tortures us, it is indeed an enemy. Because we are worldlings, we get angry, we lust after things we love. We prize them and desire them. Though one desire arise, let it not duplicate itself. Let it be as impermanent as a thing written on water. " Ah, how foolish I am," you must say, and cast it away. If, without thought, you rest in a state of ecstasy, that, indeed, is a true heart.

Shinran. In that part, the pure and limpid heart of Hōnen Sama is clearly revealed. (*As if thinking of the olden days.*) His was a pure and beautiful nature. Unlike mine. That letter's the answer to a letter from his old mother, who was sick and had told him of all her sorrows.

Shōshin. That's why he comforted and encouraged her, isn't it ? Truly, it's a gentle letter full of details such as a woman might write. (*Reads on.*) A man of genuine charity, when he sees another do evil, takes that evil upon himself and grieves, and when he sees another do good, takes that good into his own life and rejoices. In nothing is he divided from others. He thinks no evil, nor does he slander others.

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He envies not. He speaks no hate. He encourages the helpless even with a single soft and gentle word. He helps men, giving them even a little from time to time. That is the service of the Most Merciful. (*Tearfully.*) Really I feel as if I'm going to cry. What a gentle heart! (*Reads on.*) No matter how wise a saint he was, even such a Buddha as Shaka himself, when in the ancient days he received a sentient body, could not escape the pangs of disease, the universal pains of birth, decline, illness and death. In such things as the death agony, there are no distinctions between persons. If you continually deepen your conscientiousness, you may well resign yourself to die when your time comes and to live until it does. What though men should be able to live a thousand or ten thousand years, they all, both young and old, would have to die once. It is the rule of life that those who meet must part. From whom should we be unwilling to part. (*Looks at SHINRAN.*) I wonder if I hadn't better stop. Somehow I can't bear—

Shinran (tensely). Read on. At the end I remember something about the attitude to be maintained at the moment of death.

Shōshin (reading). And never think such things as, "I wish to stay a little longer in this world; ah, how sad! for now I'm about to die." (*Her voice trembles.*) When death draws near, if you are distracted in the so-called agony of death, your body is

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sure to be scattered. You cannot but suffer some pain. So no matter how you suffer, give yourself up to that pain and, saying, "If I die, I die with a will," keep calm and undisturbed. Again and again I say, don't forget this feeling. Genku. To his mother. (*She talks as she rolls up the letter.*) It's too dreadful to read the last part.

Shinran. That letter to his mother makes me feel as if his words of encouragement are spoken directly to me. The time presses on me. The time I've long awaited but still feared. I feel the need of encouragement. I feel the struggle between a terrible uneasiness and my heart which would conquer it.

Shōshin (concealing her anxiety). Is it well to think of such things? When you're so full of life as you are now? When we're all praying for your recovery? The medicine's probably ready. Please take it. (*Starts to go into the night-watch room.*)

Shinran. Never mind the medicine. Stay here. I've made up my mind. Do I seem to be so weak that you must console me with such words? (*SHŌSHIN does not reply.*) Don't talk to me like that any more. Spur me on to conquer this uneasiness, this inevitable fear. I must gather courage. And I must put my heart in order for a beautiful and unconfused end. (*SHŌSHIN weeps and SHINRAN speaks to her quietly.*) Go and call Yuien.

Shōshin. I go. (*Goes out.*)

Shinran (sits quietly with eyes closed for a moment. Finally opens his eyes. Looks about as if menaced by the shadow of something.) What's this cold shadow that comes from nowhere stealthily oppressing my soul? The paling light of the sun, the lonesomely luring voice of the wind and last night's dream—ah, it seems to have drawn near me. (*Closes his eyes.*) It's the inescapable fate of all. Haven't I waited through long decades for that day? For that eternal and tranquil rest which comes at the end of this long life of ceaseless sin and anguish? Knowing that this is the only sure and inevitable thing in the midst of the disappointed hopes of this world of many vain longings, I've waited for it. Used to thinking of it, I've become intimate with it. Haven't I often thought, "This pain and endurance is not forever. Its last day is bound to come." And hasn't that thought been my one great comfort? At last that day has come. In spite of that, why this uneasiness? This unconquerable anxiety? Death is not to me a loss. For long have I made the perfection and harmony beyond the grave my life and lived by them. I believe in them. Still there yet remains in me a something that dreads death. A heart that opposes fate. Oh, do I yet wish to live? This disease-worn I? What hope is there left in this world for an old man of ninety? What pleasure? How obstinate is the power of the passions! Even yet it's terrible.

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All my life I've accepted my fate in docility and loved it. I've served it. I've fought against the heart that rebelled against it. That's true. I must keep this fight up till I go to the grave. It won't be long now. It'll be soon now. The bugle blowing to cease fighting. Then I must stand before the judgment. A valliant warrior who has fought the evil of a lifetime. In the midst of the spiritual legions filling the sky. And I'll have a crown put on my head. I'll receive it kneeling down before Buddha. (*His face grows brighter and brighter.*) From that day, I'll be one in that noble host of saints. What peace! What glory! We'll pass our days, morning and evening, singing songs of praise to Buddha. Then not even the shadow of sin will knock at my heart. And (*tearfully*) I can save the most unfortunate mortals suffering on this earth. (*Pauses.*) Oh, anxiety! Go from me! (*He prays silently. Enter YUIEN and SHŌSHIN.*)

Yuien (*putting his hands on the mats and speaking gravely.*) How do you feel?

Shinran. It's come near me. I feel a foreboding. (*YUIEN tries to say something. SHINRAN cuts him off.*) No. I'll not try to avoid the unavoidable. I'll accept my fate. Let's talk together only of important things. (*YUIEN is silent.*) I've made up my mind.

Yuien (*painfully tense.*) Then now may your last moments be peaceful.

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(SHŌSHIN weeps. SHINRAN and YUIEN are silent. There is no sound but SHŌSHIN's weeping. Finally that, too, ceases, and all is silent.)

Shinran. Buddha is calling me. My mission in this world is finished. He probably thinks it a pity to make this old and disease-worn man suffer on any longer in this painful world. For I've lived a very long time, you see. Ninety years is a ripe old age seldom permitted to mortals. It's a good time to take leave of this world. (*Thinks.*)

Yuien. I pray that you may live on and on, but—

Shinran. That's the true heart of man. While I'm ashamed to confess it, even at this time I still feel that I don't wish to die, though I'm perfectly aware that it's illusion. I'm ashamed. I've lived my whole life perplexed in the forests of worldly passions and rising and sinking in the sea of affections. Ceaselessly calling on the name of Buddha, I've fought against the impulses of my karma. And I must keep up the fight to the grave. Yuien, pray for me at this critical time. That's necessary. I must keep my heart firm. To pass with as little shame as possible through the greatest single event of a lifetime. I'm praying for that. I want to die with a heart pure as the clear moon crossing the sky.

Yuien. Please leave all to Buddha. I'm praying for you with all my soul. (*With emphasis.*) That

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you may realize your long cherished desire of happy rebirth in Paradise.

Shinran. To die has long been my wish. It's been my single hope. How I've dreamed of the blessing awaiting me on the other side of the grave! Now has come the time for that dream to be realized. The happy time. (*Pauses.*) Last night as I prayed, I fell into a sleep. It was blessed with a grateful dream. The unworldly Pure Land, bright with majesty and beauty, spread out before my eyes. My soul was filled with a mysterious joy. I don't know how to convey to you that unearthly happiness. The Amida Sutra says, "All the men of highest virtue come together in one place." I was surrounded by a throng of saints. They all wore beautiful crowns. Abashed, I hung my head. When I heard that I had that day been added to that company, I wept for joy. Then looking, I saw that a beautiful crown was set on my head as on the rest. Then far off in the sky began to sound etherial music. To this the throng of saints joined their voices and sang songs of praise to Buddha. Then flowers fell from heaven, and all the air was filled with perfume. As I looked fascinated at the flowers raining down on the earth all covered with golden sand, I thought, "Ah, these must be the lotus blooms of Paradise." Then I awoke.

Yuien. What a holy dream!

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Shōshin. Nothing could be so becoming to you as a beautifully shining crown.

Shinran. Even after I had awakened, my heart danced with the after-effects of that joy. But since then I've begun to feel one sign distinctly. That I shall die—it's a presentiment— (*The color leaves his face.*)

Shōshin. Please lie down. (*She helps SHINRAN to lie down in his bed.*) Are you in pain?

Shinran. Yes, give me a drink. (*SHŌSHIN pours water into a mug and gives him a drink.*) Bodily anguish gives much uneasiness to men. It's the worst direct evil on earth. Many men, in their effort to escape this evil, go so far as to forget the peace of their souls. It's a punishment given to men. I'm afraid of the death agony. I must conquer that agony. I must support this last heavy burden. (*Beads of sweat stand on his forehead.*) Everything will soon be over. And for the rest, repose like a lake awaits my soul.

Yuien. And bright and shining glory!

Shinran. Death purifies everything. All the malice I've conceived during this life, and all the mistakes I've made, palliated by one sad funereal feeling, will be forgiven. The deep grass that sprouts in the graveyard will cover all foul memories. Forgetting the evil I've done, all men will say I was a good man. And I want to depart this life dissolving

all curses. I want to take my last farewell thinking that all men were kind to me and good, and praying for their happiness.

Yuien (exchanging glances with SHŌSHIN). Master, do you forgive Zenran Sama?

Shinran. I've forgiven him.

Yuien. Please send for him.

(SHINRAN does not answer.)

Shōshin (crying). Please tell him with your own lips you forgive him.

Yuien. This is the greatest wish of my life. And there's not a disciple who doesn't beseech it. You must see him by all means at the moment of your passing, or how he will grieve afterwards! Since broaching this matter once to you fifteen years ago, I've held my peace to this day. During all that time, there hasn't been a day when I haven't thought of it. I've prayed without ceasing. Please grant my request but this once. Please be reconciled with everything, so that there'll be nothing to regret afterwards. That's what you've just said. It's in keeping with Buddha's heart. Zenran Sama must dip for you the last cup. At this late hour, I have nothing but this to say. *(Weeping.)* Only, may your last moments be tranquil. May your passing be in the peace of reconciliation with all the world.

Shinran (weeping). I'll do what you all want me to.

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Yuien. I'm glad. (*Putting his hands to the floor, he looks down, and his tears fall upon the mats.*) The other day I sent a messenger to him. He ought to arrive about to-day.

Shinran. How's Zenran getting along these days?

Yuien. He's in good health in Inada.

Shinran. Does he believe in the Buddha?

Yuien. Yes. (*Hides his uneasiness.*) He seems to be living very quietly.

Shōshin. How delighted Zenran Sama will be! But, ah, that it should be just before the long parting! (*Weeps.*)

Shinran. Don't cry. (*Pauses.*) Only pray. My heart has quieted down greatly. I want to keep my spirit calm. Please be quiet. For I want to enter my long sleep in the midst of peace. (*SHŌSHIN suppresses her tears. It becomes quiet.*) The tranquillity of conscience of one who has worked his whole life long for Buddha seems to be coming to me. I feel as if my soul, with a feeling of vague longing, is being lifted up to the next world as it weeps. A quiet brightness and moist feeling envelops me like a blessing. *Yuien.* Come nearer me. So that I can better see your familiar and faithful face.

Yuien (going near). I pray for happiness for your soul.

Shinran. Oh, I pray for happiness for yours. You've served me well all your life. Get my rosary

from near my pillow. (*Taking the rosary and holding it in his hand.*) I give you these paulownia prayer beads as a remembrance of me. They're some I received from Hōnen Sama. (*YUIEN takes the rosary.*) I've always kept them with me. The protection of all the Buddhas in the three worlds is bound up in these strung beads. After I'm gone, whenever you look at them, please remember me. For I shall be praying for you in the Pure Land. (*The tone of his voice begins to change little by little.*) I've left the future affairs of the temple to you. Praying ever to Buddha, settle everything after peaceful consultation with all the others. In this world, there are unhappy people without number. Love them. Show forth the glory of Buddha. (*Rests.*)

Yuien. Don't worry about the matters you leave. Though unequal to the task, I'll join strength with all the others and plan for the prosperity of the law. Buddha will help me. The seeds of the law you've industriously sown are already putting forth young sprouts on every hand. Buddha's august name will receive through your death more and more glorification.

Shinran. Glorify his august name. (*He gradually grows ecstatic.*) Gradually my heart grows calm. I have a far-off and yearning feeling. Buddha mercifully draws me to him. Outside a cool breeze is blowing, isn't it?

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Yuien (shuddering). Yes. No, the setting sun burns red.

Shinran. It's drawn near. The omen,—the room's all cleaned, isn't it?

Yuien. To the last speck of dust.

Shinran. My body's cleansed, isn't it?

Shōshin. You were bathed yesterday.

Shinran. Call the disciples. Call them all. For me to take leave of them. To give them my last blessing.

Shōshin. I go. (*Rises.*)

Yuien (suppressing his great agitation and speaking to SHŌSHIN). The doctor.

(*SHŌSHIN hurries out.*)

Yuien (gripping SHINRAN's hand). Master, please make your spirit firm.

Shinran (nodding). A taper. Light a taper in the shrine. Namu Amida Butsu.

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE III

(*The stage is the same as in Scene I. It is night, and the temple roof stands out in black silhouette against a pale sky. High in the heavens hangs a*

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yellow moon with a rainbow-like halo about it. Two Priests with paper lanterns stand one on either side of the gate. The stage is dim in the moonlight.)

First Priest. See that halo encircling the moon.

Second Priest. It's a strange color, isn't it?

First Priest. It's yellow and has no radiance at all.

Second Priest. Ah, the superior is at last about to go from us, you see. It's written that at the death of a saint, wonders appear in the skies.

First Priest. Yesterday the ravens cried on the roof of the main hall in the saddest voices in the world.

Second Priest. Even the birds and the beasts, the herbs and the trees, begrudge with lamentation the death of a saint.

First Priest. All the important disciples have come now.

Second Priest. Only two or three haven't yet appeared.

First Priest. The important disciples have all gathered at the bedside.

Second Priest. It seems that his condition changed suddenly in the evening. The end is not far off, I think. Ah, a palanquin has come.

(A palanquin comes upon the scene. It moves rapidly toward the gate.)

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Bearer. Senshimbō Sama arrives from Tōtōmī.

First Priest. Everybody's eagerly waiting. Please go quickly to the inner hall.

(The palanquin goes in through the gate. SHŌSHIN comes hastily out of the gate with a worried expression on her face.)

Shōshin. Hasn't Jishimbō Sama arrived yet?

First Priest. Not yet. How are things within?

Shōshin (looking off attentively toward the first gate). The end has come. *(Looking up at the sky.)* Oh, the strange color of the moon!

Second Priest. It's the time of the ebb tide now. Ah, a palanquin has come.

(Another palanquin comes upon the scene and moves rapidly toward the gate. SHŌSHIN looks intently at it.)

Bearer. Kenchibō Sama arrives from Takata.

First Priest. Hurry to the inner hall. The end has already come.

(The palanquin goes in through the gate.)

Shōshin. How late Zenran Sama is! *(Walks impatiently in the garden.)*

First Priest. If he doesn't come quickly, he'll not be in time.

Second Priest (after an uneasy silence). A light. It's a lantern. A palanquin has come.

(Shōshin strains her attention. Another palanquin

comes upon the scene and moves rapidly toward the gate.)

Shōshin (running up to the palanquin). Isn't it Zenran Sama?

Bearer. Yes. It's Jishimbō Sama of Inada.

(ZENRAN leaps out of the palanquin.)

Shōshin. Zenran Sama!

Zenran. Oh, *Shōshin* Dono! How's father? How's father?

Shōshin. The end has already come.

Zenran. Oh! (Reels.)

Shōshin. He's dissolved your disinheritance. He's waiting impatiently for you.

Zenran. Does he say he'll see me?

Shōshin. He says he wants to tell you he forgives you and die.

(ZENRAN is about to run within.)

Shōshin. Wait. Just one thing. Do you believe in the Buddha?

Zenran. I don't know anything.

Shōshin. Your father's greatly troubled about that. He's sure to ask you.

Zenran. I can't believe anything.

Shōshin. Please say you believe. Say you believe. To soothe your father's heart.

Zenran. But I—

Shōshin. Please give peace to the heart of one leaving this world.

Zenran (uneasily). Eh.

Third Priest (hurrying out through the gate). Hasn't Zenran Sama come yet?

Zenran. I've just come.

Third Priest. Go as fast as you can to the inner hall. They're all impatiently waiting. Already the last moment is pressing on him. (*Exit.*)

(ZENRAN and SHŌSHIN run in through the gate. The palanquin follows. The two Priests also go in. The stage is deserted for a moment. Four or five black ravens fly out of the trees and, clouding the face of the moon, float above the temple roof crying eerily. The stage turns round.)

SCENE IV

(*The stage is the same as in Scene II. Night. Tapers burn red in the shrine. In the light of the paper lamp, disciples, warrior believers and merchants sit in respectful ranks. The Physician kneels beside the bed taking SHINRAN'S pulse. YUIEN is at the head tending to his wants. An uneasy expectancy holds the room in its sway.*)

Shinran (closes his eyes and speaks in a low voice. Since all is quiet, it can be heard distinctly. Sometimes his words become ecstatic and sometimes he speaks as if to himself.) So all remember ; neither is

a beautiful death a proof of salvation. My ability to die peacefully as I do, in a soft bed like this, with thoughtful attendance and surrounded by loving disciples, shows that I'm the recipient of mercy. I feel I don't deserve it. I can't believe I'm worthy. But you mustn't forget that there are men dying all sorts of deaths in this world. There are those who are hewn down with the sword. And those who perish in fire and water. There are those who fall by the wayside starved and frozen. And there are those who die in extraordinary and almost unbelievable ways in utterly unexpected accidents. And again there is the lovely maiden about to become a bride who on the night before her wedding suddenly falls dead. Without knowing how her mother will grieve, clasping her unfinished wedding dress to her palsied heart. Or there is the carpenter who, but a moment before gayly joking at his work, makes a mis-step and falls from the roof and dies. There are cruel cases so sudden and accidental that they do not allow even time for a tear. There are others that even make one feel cynical. The "miserable death" referred to in the Kammyō Sutra is explained as a passing in agony such as the eye can't bear to behold, in which the man clutches the empty air and white sweat runs from his pores. It's a terrible thing. There's no knowing who may die in that way according to his karma. But though they pass on in such miserable ways, if they believe

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in Buddha, they'll truly be saved. Salvation is firmly established and not dependent on circumstances. In faith, there's no positive proof. This is my last lesson to all of you. I speak it because I know well that there is nothing for which it is so hard to leave stubbornness and be obedient as it is for the human heart. Make your hearts submissive. Make them bright, believing in all things. How much better it is to believe and be deceived than to doubt the truth ! Why are men so doubting ? Because they've passed long years deceiving and being deceived too much. If this world were the Pure Land where no false thing had ever yet existed, nobody would doubt. There's benediction in a believing heart. There's imprecation in a doubting heart. If the shadow of a doubting soul could appear, it would appear in the form of a devil. Believe in Buddha's love and believe in the victory of good. (*Pauses. Then his voice becomes a little louder.*) I stand now in a strange position. Behind me are spread out the scenes of a lifetime of ninety years. And before me, all is anticipation of the next world. My soul is lifted to the skies and surprisingly expanded. The grandeur of the soul ! (*Speaks ecstaticly.*) Now my spirit soars high into heaven and is about to cross the bounds of human existence. I'm about to see with the eyes of my heart the world on the other side of the grave and this world standing opposite and their natural con-

nection ; the invisible chain that's bound my soul is now about to be severed. Breaking the indefeasible laws of this earth to which it had resigned itself, my soul is now about to enter into the control of the new laws of heaven. My tried and purified soul dances in the new life. Now, indeed, all inconsistencies are about to return into one deep harmony. And I'm beginning to understand that not one of all the sorrows of this world has been in vain. Ah ! I begin to understand that these were all in the plan of Buddha's love and justice. (*Quietly, as if to himself.*) Everything has been well. My errors have been well. The injuries I've received. There was an inescapable affinity between me and all the travelers with whom I exchanged greetings when I passed them by chance and between me and all the flowers I picked thoughtlessly on the roadside. They were all used in the fulfilment of my fate.

(*Enter SENSHIN. He bows to the disciples.*)

Yuien. Senshin Dono, come quickly to the superior's side.

Senshin (*goes to the side of SHINRAN's bed*). Master, it's Senshin.

Shinran (*opening his eyes*). Is it Senshin ? I'm glad you came. (*His eyes fall shut.*) At last I'm summoned.

Senshin. May you accomplish your long cherished desire of death in peace.

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Shinran. I'll go ahead and wait for you.

Senshin. I'll never forget your kindness. There's no affinity so deep and pure as that of master and disciple.

Shinran. We'll meet again in the next world. It's a place where there'll be no second parting.

Senshin. I'll come after you. I'll soon come. (*Tearfully.*) Really it'll be soon.

(*Tears come to the disciples' eyes. Enter KENCHI. He bows to the others. YUIEN bids him with his eyes come quickly.*)

Kenchi (*comes to the head of the bed*). It's Kenchi. Do you know me?

Shinran (*opening his eyes*). Yes. (*Closes his eyes.*) We'll meet in the Pure Land.

Kenchi. Yes.

Shinran. How fares the law in your province?

Kenchi. It becomes more and more prosperous.

Shinran. What of Senku?

Kenchi. This spring he went to Ōshū. (*Tearfully.*) He can't get here in time.

Shinran. I'd rather hear that than see him. (*Pauses.*) All live together amicably. After I'm gone, all work for the law with united strength. Never quarrel. No matter what arises to give you painful or outraged feelings, don't curse Buddha or man. Bless everything. Endure your pain. To endure is to make virtue your own. Love your

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neighbor. Treat the stranger kindly. In the name of Buddha, all be bound together. (*His voice becomes thinner and thinner and has a tendency to break.*) It's wrong for you not to treat others as you'd be treated. (*YUIEN dips a fine-haired little brush in water and moistens SHINRAN's lips. The disciples follow his example.*) The judging heart and the vowing heart come of devils. Be the servants of others. Wash their feet. Bind the thongs of their shoes. (*Pauses.*) Glorious Buddha! (*Gradually becoming more and more ecstatic.*) All the evil I did is atoned for. It's all forgiven. I become beautiful through my sins. I become beautiful through my sins. A miracle! The Seven Saintly Fruits, the Eight Right Ways—clear voiced birds sing—the serenity of groves and temples—it's a beautiful bathing pool. They're washing their golden hair. They've all taken off their shoes. How beautiful their naked feet! They fold their hands. They're all going to sing. A song of praise to Buddha.

(*Enter SHŌSHIN and ZENRAN.*)

Yuien. Zenran Sama. Come to him quickly. It's the end.

Zenran (forgetting all else, rushes unsteadily to SHINRAN's side). Father! (*His voice sticks in his throat.*)

Shinran. They're all on their knees worshipping the three jewels. Golden fruit falls from the branches

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of the trees. They all gather it up and offer it to all the Buddhas of the ten directions. Ah, flowers are falling. Flowers are falling.

Yuien (putting his mouth close to SHINRAN's ear).
Zenran Sama has come.

Zenran (speaking loud). Father. It's Zenran. Do you understand? It's I. Father.

Shinran (opening his eyes and looking into ZENRAN's face.) Oh, is it Zenran? *(Tries to raise his body, and moves his hands in vain.)*

Physician (stopping him). Lie quietly.

Zenran (weeping). I wanted to see you. Please forgive me. I—

Shinran. You're forgiven. There's nobody who judges you.

Zenran. I'm an unfilial son.

Shinran. You were unfortunate.

Zenran. I'm a bad man. Others have been made unhappy on my account. I curse my own existence.

Shinran. Oh, terrible! To curse one's own self! Bless yourself. It's the demons who are bad. You're a child of Buddha made in his form.

Zenran. I'm unfit. I've heaped up many sins.

Shinran. Amida atoned for those sins aeons ago. They're forgiven, they're forgiven. *(His voice grows*

thin and stops. The Physician raises his brows.) Now I'm going to leave this world. (*Thinly but firmly.*) Do you believe in Buddha? (ZENRAN *makes no reply.*) Don't refuse his mercy. Say you believe. Give peace to my heart on the day my soul returns above. (ZENRAN *turns pale with the anguish in his soul.*) All you have to do is receive it.

(*All are tense. SHŌSHIN turns pale and sits looking at ZENRAN with eyes like fire. ZENRAN's lips are convulsed with pain. He begins to say something and hesitates. Finally he speaks despairingly.*)

Zenran. My wretchedness—I don't know. I can't decide. (*Falls forward. SHŌSHIN turns deathly pale.*)

Shinran. Oh. (*Closes his eyes.*)

(*All are agitated.*)

Physician. Everybody, this is the end.

(*The deep inner emotion reaches its height. But all is still and nobody raises a voice. The disciples go to the head of the bed. In turn, they moisten SHINRAN's lips.*)

Shinran (*moves his lips slightly and an expression of agony appears in his face. Then it gradually calms and finally becomes the quiet expression of peace enjoyed only by the blessed. In a small but firm voice.*) That's all right. Everybody's saved. It's a good and harmonious world. (*A bright beauty not of this world spreads over his face.*) Oh, peace! The farthest, the deepest. Namu Amida Butsu.

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Physician. He's dead.

(Noble emotion. The whole room becomes absolutely quiet. All fold their hands. For a while, they all repeat, "Namu Amida Butsu." At last they cease. For a moment all are quiet. Peaceful heavenly music. It is the sign that SHINRAN'S soul has returned above.)

(Curtain.)

THE END.

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